

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS TO CONSIDER IN AN ANALYSIS  
OF THE PROBLEM OF LABOR DISCIPLINE

Csaba Makó  
Tamás Gyekiczky

Labor discipline is a key question in the contemporary history of Central Eastern Europe. According to domestic mass media of communication, however, "undisciplined" work appears to be causing a nearly insoluble problem only in socialist societies although managerial control over and punishment of workforce behavior are coeval with modern industrial societies.

In this study we present the historical metamorphoses of control over the industrial work force, while attempting a summary of Hungarian experience on the basis of early and more recent research results.

Types of Disciplinary Measures in Capitalist Work Organization

In Hungarian society the view persists that order and discipline prevail in capitalist firms under the threat of unemployment for workers. This leads some people to conclude that introduction of unemployment would and should be the remedy for poor labor discipline in Hungary as well.

The assumption that such a link exists between labor discipline and unemployment is a holdover from the ideological world view of the 1950s (Gyekiczky, 1984). Its reality is challenged by the history of capitalist work organization, by the variety of regulatory forms and techniques which capitalist enterprise management employed and still employs to secure workshop discipline.

"Panoptic" Labor Discipline (term borrowed from Gaudemar, 1982)

The emergence of modern manufacturing industry was accompanied by the question of how to instill a cooperative spirit in workers doing specific jobs at a given place of work.

When industrial work organization was born, the rules of intra-firm competition were patterned on pre-existing social institutions. These rules were based on norms of conduct governing the family, the army and penitentiary institutions.

Jeremy Bentham, for example, saw guarantees for a cooperative attitude on the part of industrial workers in the general transparency of work tasks, in control exercised at any moment, and in organization of constant and invisible supervision (Bentham, 1797). He also referred to "combination of interests and duties" as a desideratum.

In a contemporary book one can read that order, cleanliness, silence and supervision, with primary emphasis on order, were the shopfloor slogans of industrialization gaining momentum in the early 18th century, because ". . . order is the basis of any prosperity. . . owner to follow reminds one of the role of a father. What Bergerey proposed was explicitly paternalistic behavior, the owner having to win prestige, to be well-intentioned towards but strict with his workers, so as to ensure that he was both liked and feared by his men.

Though internal regulations of firms at that time were far from

uniform in respect to penalties (they may appear rather accidental and improvised to the modern mind) incidents emerged of behavior entailing the application of sanctions. Incidents considered as such were mainly drinking and damage to firm property, as well as rough jokes and foul language.

#### The "Factory Town" Model as an Extensive Form of Labor Discipline

The "factory town" model as a form of discipline boils down to an attempt by the mill owner to make the environment surrounding a factory, where internal regulations were not automatically observed, factory-centered.

This form of discipline grew out of the paternalistic concept of employer-employee relationships. The paternalistic owner looked after his subordinates and workers outside the factory gates as well as within them. He devised rules similar to the factory's internal regulations to govern the residential areas (Gaudemar, 1982). Within the confines of the "town" several elements of social concern prevailed (pension pay-offices and provision of schooling for family members), coupled with many restrictions (among other things, under a certain age only single people were employed in the factory, and those guilty of "illegal childbirth" had to leave both the factory and the residential area).

The "factory town" concept rested on the recognition that workers did not observe management's disciplinary and other rules except through subjective identification with them (Gaudemar, 1982). Control extending to the worker's family was meant to promote such identification, relying on the primary role of the family in assimilating the norms of social cooperation.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the existing set of social conditions for discipline practices was favorable to adaptation to the intra-firm environment.

In connection with this set of conditions we do not have in mind application of piecework wages. Competition which that wage system induced between workers tended to erode intrafirm cooperation, so this form of wage payment had contradictory effects and generated social strains from the moment of its introduction. In 1833, piecework wages were paid to only 47 percent of the 67,819 workers at 225 weaving mills in the United States.

Drives and propaganda campaigns which were intended to create and spread an ethos of obedience and the new order had a much more essential effect than that exerted by the form of wage payment on the observance of discipline (Pollard, 1963). Thus, for instance, a countrywide campaign against alcoholism was launched because workers and engineers were at times incapacitated from work by excessive consumption of alcohol.

Efforts to transform workforce morale were aimed at reinforcing values desirable to industrial work, and at suppressing undesirable ones. Undue self-confidence and self-complacency were stigmatized, and at the same time increasing emphasis was placed on materiality. An important element of creating a new way of life in the domain of industrial work was the effort to organize the use of leisure, or to take various measures to suppress ways of spending money (such as excessive consumption of alcohol) which acted to reduce work performance.

The main conflicts in the early processes of industrialization stemmed from the contradiction between industrial and agrarian societies. The industrial society required a different life style and thinking in different terms than did agrarian society. It stands to reason, therefore, that bourgeois urban culture in the making launched a deliberate struggle against rural culture. Since "the traditional social habits and norms rarely coincided with the new norms of industrial life, they were condemned (discredited) as drawbacks of progress." (quoted by Pollard, 1965:82, from Harrison, 1950.)

Regulation of time spent in work became a key issue with the establishment of modern industrial societies. Not only did introduction of rational working methods transform society's view of time and space. In the wake of social struggles there also emerged the concept of length of work time declared as provisions of law (Offe, Hinrichs & Wiesenthal, 1983). Accordingly, daily hours of work were not merely a "technical norm" but the result of a broad social agreement.

Regulation of labor discipline in the 18th and 19th centuries was determined, in effect, by a process of industrial adaptation on the part of certain groups in traditional society. The requirements of adaptation reflected the internal, objective relationships in the emerging industrial work organizations, and expectations resulting therefrom. This process is clearly manifest in the operation of large enterprises. For example, in Italy the bureaucratic-military order forged a new professional management which did not yet exist at the time. In this context Butera (1984) calls attention to the contradictions between intra-factory "rationality" and extra-factory "irrationality." In the last analysis, the norms of conduct in the new society were determined and supported by the whole of culture (Thompson, 1973).

However, the other side of this interrelationship (the spread of new expectations emerging in the organization of work) is no less important. Thus, for instance, the contradiction between "order" inside the firm and "disorder" in society at large was to be resolved by the pan-social diffusion of norms evolved inside the firm (Butera, 1984).

The impersonality of industrial work gave rise to the appreciation of social achievements and merits, and generalized a rational and problem-oriented mentality. The transparency of the division of labor was coupled with the development of competence and an awareness of new types of cooperation on a societal scale. Punctuality, now at the apex of human values, revamped the hierarchy of values of the personality, just as social respect for property resulted from the recognition won for the prestige of enterprise property.

#### The "Mechanized Workshop" Concept

The "mechanized workshop" model of regulation of labor discipline came about under the impact of social conditions radically different from those which had called into being the other two models discussed above. This concept resulted from a scientific organization of work and embraced all the innovations which Taylorism introduced into industrial work organization.

Control over cooperation, necessary in the labor process, was taken over by the requirements of mechanical-technical processes. This

eliminated the subjective methods of direction and management based on the constant presence of managers. The standardization of the wage system was an equally important aspect. Economic and technical control was thus interwoven in the organization of the Taylorian workshop.

The methods of control introduced were legitimized not only by the ideology of reliance on science, but also by the social partners concerned. The result was a higher degree of adaptation. The idea and practice of management based on personal prestige was strongly shaken, though not completely destroyed, by Taylorism.

Nevertheless, Taylor's attempts to bring about a disciplined workshop, where workers found it paid to observe discipline and therefore worked efficiently without supervision, were accompanied by a series of social strains (Coriat, 1979).

#### The "Democratic Workshop" Concept, or Contractual Discipline

In Germany a surprising study was published in 1900, one that stated the case for abolition of despotic conditions in workshops, for starting political shifts within factories to replace arbitrary management with constitutional governance, for setting up intra-firm parliaments whose members were to be elected in part by workers and in part by proprietors (Feese, 1900).

In the background of the democratic workshop concept was a need to eliminate conflicts as well as maintaining order and discipline. The idea of removing conflicts seemed absurd when the institutional system of society was incapable of influencing even social conflicts. The democratic workshop, or contractual disciplining, spared employers a good deal of the burdens of disciplining and organizing production. This enabled them to concentrate more attention on coping with financial and commercial business. In establishing such practices, the trade unions' acceptance of a new type of social task (Gaudemar, 1982) was as essential as the extension of the capitalist state's rule-making activity to labor-management relations. The operation of this model was conditional on the trade unions accepting a role in the disciplining of workers, more specifically in resolving conflict between capital and wage work, thereby securing the continuity of production. At the same time it was necessary to make provision for control over the observance of legal guarantees (Ministere de l'Interieur, 1983). Consequently, trade union activity was to be of advantage to both labor and management.

Present-day literature reflects in general a rather favorable view of the spread of employment relations based on a new consensus between management and labor, claiming it to represent the desirable trend of development. A favorable impact on cooperation is emphasized in the first place.

"If strikes and revolutionary turbulence are to be avoided, in one word, if ills are to be cured at their roots, the legitimate motives of labor discontent must be eliminated as fast as possible. Cooperation, or workers' share in the proprietor's profit, is the only means of achieving the desired result . . . ." (Ministere de l'Interieur, 1983:12)

However, caution in this respect is advised by historical experience. The aforementioned main types of discipline employed by capitalist enterprises did not, with their emergence, do away with formerly dominant forms of discipline. Examples of such survivals are

provided by the operation of industrial enterprises today. Certain approaches do not exclude others, since conditions molded by the social environment and the requirement of efficiency both call for parallel application of various disciplining procedures. This brief survey of types goes to show also that the norms of conduct and the values characteristic of the world of capitalist firms did not become securely established overnight. Even a long process of historical development failed to find a definitive solution for all the problems of discipline.

The fact that the struggle against infringements of discipline is still being waged, despite centuries-old persistent efforts by capitalist management, is a clear indication that the roots of conflict in capitalist firms are entrenched not only in the factors and conditions repeatedly subjected to attempts at regulation, but in the very structure of the industrial mode of production, the contradictions of which cannot be eliminated by a mere regulation of social relations in the workshop.

At the same time one should not underestimate the results achieved by the regulation of intra-firm conflicts over the past 100 to 150 years. Although it was impossible to attain the social goal of regulatory endeavors (to eliminate conflicts) the renewed efforts are clear evidence of the possibility of organizing human cooperation and collaboration even under a set of social relations that are permeated with the antagonism existing between wage-work and capital.

#### Deterioration of Labor Discipline, or Crisis of the Capitalist Work Organization

It is generally held that the capitalist labor process is currently in crisis. Many see the relaxation of labor discipline as the root cause of the crisis (Dubois, 1958; Pollard, 1965). This is ultimately generated by the erosion of the traditional political and moral norms legitimating social prestige. In providing an explanation, these people call attention to the increased demands on labor, changes in the age-pattern (a growing ratio of young persons) among the gainfully occupied, and the socio-organizational implications of microelectronic innovations.

The labor process is one of cooperation, the participants in which (workers, enterprise management and social guidance) play their mutually supplementary roles in the intertwining zone of consensus and conflict, within given frameworks of continuous organizational functioning as conditioned by the transmission of social relations (Makó, 1985). Accordingly, historically changing forms of control emanating from power are essential elements of the labor process, understood to be a form of cooperation among people (Gaudemar, 1982).

Punishment intended as a means of discipline represents a social force only when exercised as legitimate power. Hence management has to win support of social guidance for the exercise of power outside the enterprise, as well. The relationship between the two spheres can be interpreted as moving between the extremes of support and confrontation.

The main form of power in capitalist firms is managerial control over labor and lower management, but historical types of the capitalist labor process include control by one group of workers over another (Makó, 1985).

Under industrial social conditions, involvement in the exercise of various forms of power is through social strains due to the division of labor and specialization (among other things). Cooperation in the labor process is a priori injected with conflicts by the diversity of interests accompanying the different lines of work, but also promoting the emergence of fresh forms of cooperation.

Given the prevailing pattern of the division of labor and the frameworks of power based on it, labor discipline is the most suitable factor for ensuring cooperation. Its acceptance is the key to the norms framed in a given organizational hierarchy on the one hand, and to the success of organizational cooperation on the other (Makó, 1985). Any shift in the balance of power and social consensus is therefore manifest in the quality and state of labor discipline as well.

The participants in the labor process (mainly workers) react to shifts in institutionally established frameworks with active rather than passive adjustments. Their activity aims to change the social conditions of the labor process. Their reactions depend partly on their social contentment at the macro and micro levels, partly on the means of interest mediation as learned from previous generations of workers and refined by them. These individual and collective actions by workers in turn trigger managerial responses changing with the course of history, but always retaining a common feature. Capitalist management has responded to collective actions more sharply and more vigorously than to individual resistance (dismissals consequent on wildcat strikes--Gershuny, 1973).

Taylorism and Fordism operated to give prominence to technological control, and to overshadow the "visible" system of power institutions. The technical system of production came to play a growing role in shaping patterns of work organization and cooperative relations, as well as in devising the forms of cooperation and consensus (Gaudemar, 1982). The different skills necessary for the operation of a particular technology and their monopolization, as well as the extent of participation in technological processes, tended to produce unequal workforce positions. These entailed differentiation in the punishment strategy of capitalist management. In the case of groups of workers with rare and special skills, there is a tendency for changes to occur in hierarchical and power relationships. Management's dependence on support from such groups of workers is greater than the dependence of such groups on management.

In point of fact, capitalist management never has employed a uniform strategy for disciplining. It allowed certain groups and segments of workers a notable degree of independence with a view to enhancing the efficiency of use-value production, using mainly incentive and rewarding techniques in influencing their behavior. But it showed no particular "understanding" towards workers in weak positions in the labor process and the labor market, applying against them the harshest and most demonstrative forms of discipline possible. It should be added that the means of discipline or punishment, and reward or stimulation, cannot always be separated. For instance, piecework wages serve both to stimulate workers (causing them to increase their participation) and to discipline them by way of economic pressure.

The process of social change has radically reshaped the conditions for and the forms of social control over manpower. In 1937, for

instance, the extra-firm behavior of workers at the Ford Works was controlled by the private police of the Works. A worker who neglected his household had reason to fear dismissal. Leading a life objectionable to management could mean pay cuts and loss of bonuses. By contrast, in the second part of the 1960s, extra-firm control of manpower was exercised by institutions which formulated objects and values of life in a welfare society. Intra-firm control was secured by trade unions and the objective frameworks of work schedules as defined by technological requirements.

However, in spite of such far-reaching social changes, there is no essential difference between the present-day forms of work force behavior subject to disciplinary penalties, and those of 150 years ago. This, too, goes to show that patterns of behavior inside the work organization, forms and types of work force conduct, have far deeper roots in the fundamental relations of industrial society (which is operating the work organization) than would allow scope for the application of any concrete procedure to solve definitively the problems of discipline.

### Hungarian Experience

Labor discipline was given great emphasis in the rhetoric of the political leadership and in propaganda materials after the economic reform in Hungary in the 1960s. While countrywide campaigns seemed to work themselves out by the 1970s, labor discipline remained an evergreen aspect of political public life.

The political commitment to strengthen labor discipline is an essential feature of practice in socialist societies. In the countries of central-eastern Europe, in contrast to capitalist societies, social representation of norms and values of human cooperation in work also is coordinated by state intervention (Bihari, 1985; Kulcsár, 1980). Since, however, the institutions of state intervention were not adjusted to real social relations, particularly in the first years of the industrialization drive, they provided a background for a rearrangement of norms and values independent of political endeavors (Kulcsár, 1980).

### Campaigns for Labor Discipline

The history of the past 40 years recorded three intensive campaigns, deliberately launched by the political leadership, to improve labor discipline. The first was carried on in 1951-52, the second in 1964-65, and the third started in the mid-1980s.

All three campaigns coincided with economic troubles, the sharpening of efficiency problems and stagnation of real wages. Although the concrete causes of economic ills differed by period (Butera, 1984), these campaigns showed several points of similarity: looking for scapegoats, attribution of economic difficulties to external causes, and a trend to direct use of legal means. The failure to make a realistic analysis of the work organization and the labor process, and disregard for the experience already analyzed, were added features common to these drives. Finally, ideologies suggestive of a fictive image of society were formulated in an effort to legitimize the campaigns. The resultant assessment of the situation held that workplaces were full of double-crossers and skulkers, that management

did not take sufficiently firm measures against them, and that the burdens were carried by an anonymous majority of honest workers. Except in the 1960s, there was little or no talk of interests and practically no talk of wages and salaries.

That none of the campaigns proved really successful was no surprise. According to statistical data, in the early 1950s, for instance, workers continued to leave their places of work and to be absent from work without good cause, despite strict penalties. Moreover, with the labor market coming into play, even the models of loyalty to the enterprise (skilled workers and senior employees) left their places of work when better conditions of work or higher pay were available elsewhere. In other words, work force behavior follows rules different from those presupposed or suggested in the deliberate political campaigns. For related research results from the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, see Wilkinson (1983).

Under legal regulations in the 1950s, management was free to impose disciplinary penalties on undisciplined workers, as provided for in labor legislation. Criminal proceedings could be initiated against those absent from work without good cause, and those arbitrarily leaving employment. Although legislation did not provide for the criminal liability of the latter, adverse awards were adjudicated to 15,000 workers during the two years of the first campaign. Of course, this figure pales in comparison to the immense mass of direct disciplinary actions initiated during the period.

The cases of labor discipline at the time were of three main types. One involved problems of production. If a factory turned out shoddy products and the fact was discovered, the case was closed by punishing an employee for breach of discipline. A second involved infringement of labor safety regulations. This type made up the majority of disciplinary actions in the pre-1952 period. A third type involved conflicts within the enterprise power structure arising from rapid social change, such as disagreements between the "new" and "old" intelligentsia, between the director and his "worker cadre" head of department.

The persons brought to disciplinary responsibility in cases of the first type were mostly middle-level technical managers and senior specialists. Punishment rarely entailed final loss of position, because disciplinary judgements were appealed more often than not and responsibility was shifted to others for such things as errors in planning or in the preparatory process. The second type of cases included semi-skilled and skilled workers, middle-level administrative employees, unskilled workers, and plant security guards. Their reactions ranged from indifferent acquiescence to vigorous protest. The third type of disciplinary cases involved mainly senior personnel in high echelons of management.

By contrast, the social composition of workers brought to criminal responsibility showed a rather homogenous pattern. Such fates were met chiefly by people at a disadvantage in both the social structure and the work organization. Characteristically, their social situations compelled conflict with regulations concerning the performance of work. They had to care for ill children, to till the land for their old parents to meet compulsory delivery obligations, to do share-cropping and threshing in order to support many dependents, and the like. As a rule, they did not protest against adverse awards even in



cases of non-culpability. They did not appeal against court orders. As few as three percent of them filed such appeals.

The foregoing clearly points to a differentiated disciplining strategy of management. Less severe action was taken against workers with a central role in the work organization. Stricter and often arbitrary measures were taken against those in marginal positions.

### Specific Features of the Work Organization Influencing Disciplinary Practice

Peculiarities of work organizations bear upon disciplinary practices in Hungary. (Macroeconomic characteristics influencing disciplinary practice will not be treated here; they are supposed to be known, mainly from Bauer, 1981 and Richard, 1904.)

Primary emphasis should be laid on the significance of the fact that the history of industrial work organizations in Hungary did not produce the forms of work organization reviewed in the first part of this study, and characteristic of the evolution of capitalist industrial organizations. Bureaucratic control of operational conditions made technologically-dictated cooperation among actors in the labor process extremely difficult, even in work organizations subject to technological control. Quasi-bureaucratic work organizations emerged, where pre-existing institutional forms proved narrow or insufficient for managing conflicts of interest. These phenomena were called into being by the impact of several factors related to operation of the Hungarian economy and its character as a short-supply economy. For instance, if capital-intensive technology is operated in labor-intensive form or if basic production is streamlined by imported technology but supporting activities are not, resolution of the resulting difficulties of technological one-sidedness inevitably is attempted by administrative intervention. The frequent failure of such recourse to bureaucratic norms leads to an upgrading of the role played in production by certain groups of workers (Makó, 1985:151).

At the same time, narrow frameworks of political interest mediation impeded discovery and solution of social conflicts of interest generated by industrialization. As there was no organizational-institutional basis for adjusting social relations which were rearranged in the course of transformation, (natural) resistance to change had no scope for manifesting itself except in uninstitutionalized aspects of human cooperation, staying partly imprisoned in the psychic sphere.

In an effort to fulfil prescribed plan targets, enterprise and workshop management offered partnership by concluding internal agreements prohibited by the political leadership. But proving its compliance with the rules of the legitimate game, management also took harsh action against groups of workers whose partial dismissal did not jeopardize the production process and who would have left sooner or later anyway.

While the political leadership pressed for a repressive solution of conflicts in the work organization, by way of labor discipline campaigns and legal regulations, enterprise management laid emphasis on cooperation (while meeting the demands of politics with respect to a certain range of workers). Its bargaining position vis-a-vis top management was dependent on that course of action.

What types of behavior were likely to provide a basis for the

institution of legal proceedings?

The Labor Code, which covered types of behavior offending labor discipline in depth, gave prominence to political motives. Behaviors were singled out which "indicate opposition to the state and social order of the people's democracy." By contrast, enterprise management preferred invoking the government decree which predated the Labor Code. It provided that wage-fraud, abuse of work clothing, and causing unintentional damage were disciplinary offenses. Management insistence on the application of this older decree was understandable. Clothing of conflicts in political garb would have eroded the rather unstable cooperation then in the making and crucial to fulfilment of plan targets.

Industrialization naturally called for population adaptation to the requirements of the industrial system. This recognition lay behind the still common view that, had it not been for the strict discipline of the 1950s, it would have been impossible to bring about the industrial foundations underpinning later development.

Inquiries into the actual circumstances of the 1950s reveal that a number of coercive measures were intended to generate momentum for the flow of the agricultural population into industry. But the harshest type of disciplinary penalties were not directed merely against this group of the population. Forty percent of those subjected to disciplinary punishment had been industrial workers before the 1950s. Even the ancestors of thirty percent of them had been industrial workers. To boot, failure to observe internal rules of operation in work organizations ranked only 4th or 5th among the causes of conflict (Gyekiczky, 1973).

In reality, the adaptation at the time was a political one. Measures to ensure it were designed to stifle expression of workers' interests and thereby facilitate administrative manpower management. Work force behavior offending against labor discipline accordingly was to be construed as a manifestation of a specific strategy for interest mediation, depending on existing institutional frameworks and values, on traditional ways of bargaining, and on the possibility of assimilating them.

We have dwelt on the 1950s, not because the disciplinary practice of the period is itself so interesting, but because any campaign launched to establish discipline by central directives is considered a survival of the regulatory logic prevailing during the 1950s. The permanence of that logic under a changed set of socio-economic conditions is, in our view, extremely dangerous socially as well as politically.

The change in conditions by the 1960s was most glaringly evident in the amendment of legal regulations. Although the labor legislation of the 1960s reintroduced harsh penal measures in accordance with the campaign launched at that time, behaviors liable to punishment were defined rather broadly as amounting to breach of duty connected with employment relations. From the point of view of regulatory practice, this meant a Damoclean bane rather than clear guidance on wrongful behavior (which is, for that matter, almost impossible to provide).

When settled, labor law allowed scope for disciplining of other types as well. In effect the rules on labor discipline, modelled as they are on penal law, still refer to employment-related duties. They refer back to the labor contract, that is to the agreement between management and labor. To the extent to which the labor contract rises

to its real status, and social conditions are created guaranteeing observance of contractual norms for parties with different power status, we may take a step toward one indispensable prerequisite of abandoning the penal regulation of labor discipline. As long as the operation of the work organization is dominated by invisible rules of cooperation and there is no institutional basis for conflict management and human cooperation in production, the contractual principle naturally will fail to come fully into play. Yet this cannot serve as a pretext for maintaining paradoxical regulation of disciplinary offences on the model of penal law.

The disciplinary strategies of the 1980s treated as private affairs of enterprises are of great variety. They depend on enterprise positions in the labor market, on traditions of the workforce at factories and enterprises, on the qualifications of enterprise management, on its willingness and ability to accept conflict, and so on.

Our inquiries showed no case either of disciplinary action or of labor arbitration at some enterprises for the past two or three years. We did uncover attempts by service firms to "stimulate" workers by disciplinary measures. In comparison with the 1960s there has been a greater measure of consensus between enterprise management and workers in central positions, which is further strengthened by changes initiated in the early 1980s. These include the appearance of intra-enterprise business partnerships (VGMKs), a special kind of internal subcontracting known in the industrial practice of capitalist countries. Local political and economic power and special skills are elements of the power structure which, organized in varying ways by enterprises, currently control intra-firm disciplinary practices (Petho, 1985).

An important fact bearing on behavior in the course of employment is that our economy shows trends of multisectoralism. This alters the attitude to work. It "rewrites" the hitherto valid work standards and values rooted in rural society (Gaudemar, 1982). Dissatisfaction with work done under existing conditions and resistance to workplace requirements are not, in our view, necessarily signs of indiscipline. Partly they indicate the lack of reforms that are vital and indispensable for putting social reproductive processes on a new course. In other words, the crisis of prevailing modes of cooperation should be seen as a manifestation of a demand for new types of human cooperation. The crisis of labor discipline should be seen as one of the ways in which cooperation is practiced and conflicts are resolved.

Before making closing remarks on the latest developments in Hungary, we shall sum up in brief the theoretical substance of the foregoing discussion.

#### Labor Discipline as a Form of Cooperation and Adaptation

Sociologically, labor discipline is treated as an element, given and indispensable, of the industrial labor process and as a guarantee of cooperation taking shape in that process. At the same time, it is a form of cooperation between social partners in the labor process, one that appears in various rules and regulations concerning interest and power relations between workers and management as partners.

Industrial work organization rests on the organizational separation of the division of labor, on specialization, and on the

synchronization or coordination in time of isolated tasks. The interests and aspirations of members in the work organization are isolated in a lasting way. Isolated interests and differentiated interest relations form the basis for the centripetal aspirations of those cooperating in the labor process. The synchronization of work tasks comes about as a result of subduing centrifugal tendencies, of applying "techniques" of cooperation which are manifest in continuous managerial control over and assessment of isolated tasks. In the course of coordination and control aimed at ensuring the continuity of production, enterprise management often resorts to incentive methods based on the duality of reward and punishment. The central element of these methods is constituted by the regulation of wages and working conditions.

At the same time the labor process is a process of distribution of diverse goods. Changing norms of distributive relations, changes in rewards or punishments for behavior of the participants in the labor process (particularly workers) thus give rise to a series of social conflicts. The social institutions regulating such conflicts thereby become part and parcel of the regulation of social relations surrounding the performance of work.

Cooperation in the labor process should be maintained on a continuous basis. The possibility of doing so is diminished by a strategy merely of punishment. Continuous maintenance of power calls for a relaxation of too-strict punitive rules, and differential treatment of groups of workers formed in the labor process appropriate to their weight and actual function. Aspirations prohibited for groups not sharing in power are perhaps also tolerated by a redistribution of participation in power (management).

Continuous maintenance of power manifests itself in various social institutions of control over the labor process. It extends to those outside the factory gate, for instance to educational establishments, thereby ensuring the reproduction of behaviors required for the performance of work. The social basis of control is constituted by the creation and spread of such norms of behavior and such values as are needed for human cooperation to evolve in the labor process.

The participants in the labor process play their socially determined roles in a particular work organization. The hierarchically regulated world of the organization--the institutionalized or visible form of power--sets up the norms and standards of behavior whose assimilation may be the clue to successful participation in the labor process. The operation of the organization engenders a kind of social adaptation, in the presence of which infringement of the organization's norms calls into play society's punitive power, which is deemed to be legitimate. (A discussion of different forms of legitimacy would go beyond the scope of this study. We note only that institutions without social legitimacy exert their effect in response to structural pressure. For a fuller discussion see Keenoy, 1981.) Social acceptance or rejection of punishments designed to strengthen labor discipline clearly reflect the state of social cooperation in the labor process.

The employer's right to mete out punishment implies, in any social system, the right to enforce social adaptation in the labor process. If consensus across the social scale becomes corroded, social conflicts also appear in the work organization in the guise of "deteriorating" labor discipline. When society finds itself in a

crisis situation, this process may become very vigorous. All this also naturally implies that the new type of social cooperation is bound to react upon the norms and standards of labor discipline.

#### Closing Remarks on the Latest Developments in Hungary

In concluding our study, we shall comment briefly on the drive for labor discipline which is being launched by a whole series of state measures, and furnish some insight into its ideological background. This drive constitutes the latest development agitating many people.

From behind the efforts at administratively induced improvement of labor discipline, there emerges an image of the economy and society resembling in many ways that of the 1950s. Thus the socialist system might be seen as a unified system of organizations, composed of closely interlocking elements which evolve a common pattern of workforce behavior everywhere. These behaviors might be described using polar categories such as "disciplined/undisciplined" or "following norms/violating norms," which would imply that norms are clear and uniform everywhere, and transparent for all.

In fact, the socialist economy did not constitute such a united and homogenous system even at the moment the relevant theory was born. In the early 1950s the structure of work organizations was made heterogeneous by small peasant farms and agricultural enterprises, by cooperative state farms, and also by the artisans' sector (which was always present, albeit initially disguised and later emerging into the open). In the 1980s a new pattern of work organization also appeared in state industry, often for the purpose of doing the same jobs formerly performed on enterprise time.

Evolving alternatives provided workers some norms and some chances (such as with respect to use of free time and paid holidays) which allowed reformulation of the requirements for participation in work.

Society is witness to a multi-channel flow of behaviors as well as of the norms and values governing them. Norms and stereotypical actions which have proven their value in an organization are transplanted into other organizations, guided by a different logic of operation. The resultant erosion of organizational norms may easily appear to indicate a deterioration of discipline. (Imperfections of the organization of full-time work are analyzed by Szmicssek, 1986, in light of the operation of VGMKs.)

Developments in the past few years have undoubtedly cleared the way for a more open manifestation of values. In our view, however, the degree of openness is not enough for us to become masters of the future. The coming years can be expected to enrich systems of organizations built on the labor process. Legal recognition of the competition of values may be interpreted as a condition necessary but not sufficient for steering the course of the future. To establish a pre-existing but not functioning value system as an ideal of discipline, and to rule out all other values, are equal to reinforcing the conservative values of administrative management.

The effects of the full development of the reform process and the ensuing momentum of economic growth naturally will be manifest in changing weights of economic sectors and a reassessment of their roles. The expected fuller development of the service sector, the social organization of a system of exchange and transmission of information, the growing importance of education and training, and the

like will also mean expansion of that sphere of the economy. This will call for an organizational setup different from that of industry, and hence incapable of following the model of the machine industry's workshop organization, which is adjusted to the demands of administrative management.

The probable direction of economic development thus will make even more anachronistic the largely outworn values and norms which an ideological view of society (accompanying the campaign) regards as deduced from the "objective world order." The requirements of profitability and efficiency call for a multifirmity of human cooperation in the labor process, and of directive and managerial methods for ensuring cooperation. The current campaign, however, demanding as it does generalized norms applicable to all, is counterproductive for this desirable course of development.

A key aspect of development concerns the economic and social effects to be produced by the techniques and technologies employed. Will the latest high technology conserve or disrupt the existing hierarchical pattern of work organization? Both domestic and international experience shows that while the most modern technological systems can be adjusted to established hierarchical forms of organization (consider the reequipment of the printing industry in Hungary) new models of work organization also follow in their wake (Sabel, 1982; Simonyi, 1986).

Introduction of the latest technological systems tends to produce still more contradictory effects on society as a whole. As is demonstrated by empirical analyses, the appearance of a new technology does not automatically generate action and postures in support of technological advance. Often it is precisely the groups of managers and workers most directly concerned who protest against the application of new techniques and technologies. Yet their reactions cannot be described and appraised by some sort of dichotomous, clear formula. Such a simplified presentation of social reality does nothing but increase the risk of abortive action.

New technologies create new capacities and raise new demands, with the people affected cherishing new aspirations and mapping out new courses of action, formulating new norms that do not fit in with the traditional forms of cooperation. We wonder if a worker who "argues," or relies on his own professional skill rather than the professional competence of management, can and may be declared to be "undisciplined." The weight of this question cannot but grow with the probable increase in the significance of creativity.

New technologies place new requirements upon management as well. Certain representatives and occasionally even groups of managers put up resistance. They impede the development of the innovative process in order to keep their positions and influence (Wilkinson, 1983). Without undertaking an analysis of this question, we confine ourselves to pointing out that different attitudes to new technology are clearly impossible to interpret in terms of contrasting categories of "disciplined" and "undisciplined."

Defense of aggregate work time is one of the chief slogans of the present-day campaign. By contrast, some Hungarian researchers refer to ten or eleven hours of daily work time, and to an intensity of work exceeding the European average (Adler, 1986; Thoma, 1986). Under such circumstances, the slogan of defending work time serves in part to divert attention from the real problems encountered in industrial and

non-industrial work in Hungary, and in part to conceal conflicts arising out of the inner logic of industrial work organization and the performance of work manifesting themselves in human behavior.

The campaign is conducted as if the infrastructure serving the population and supporting the system of industrial production--kindergarten and school networks, commerce, transport, services and so on--had been established to a sufficient degree and were functioning well. It fails to take into account the fact that industrial work, involving greater intellectual and physical efforts than any previous form of work, can only be done with great expenditure of energy if the infrastructural facilities adequately perform their function of relieving pressure on workers.

The treatment of time spent in work as a mere technical norm, and ensuing central measures, fail to consider that in societies placing the industrial system in the center of social reproduction, work time takes shape in a historically conditioned domain of social agreements, just as wages or the mass of labor legislation do. Again, specifics of the diverse arenas of work and its structural pattern are ignored.

A discussion of numerous important aspects of the campaign for labor discipline would have exceeded the scope of this brief survey. We could not present evidence in support of our reservations concerning the benefits expected to result from efforts by management of a producing enterprise, operating at a loss, to stimulate workers for fuller use of work time, so that they turn out an even larger volume of unsalable goods. Nor can we but refer to the mechanisms of the search for scapegoats. But the foregoing may have indicated our posture.

The ills of the Hungarian economy, which have grown acute in the 1980s, cannot be cured by administrative strengthening of labor discipline. Should the country still try to follow that course, it might be courting the same fate that befell the surgeon in the story: the operation was a success, but the patient died.

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