Workers’ Participation and the Control of Labour

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A Peculiar Configuration

Malta's labour topography resembles that of industrialised states, with a negligible agricultural segment, and a substantial industrial and service oriented labour force. But, apart from five modest gifts of nature – sun, sea, sand, salt and stone – the archipelago is bereft of mineral or other exploitable resources. Cheated of economies of scale and limited by insufficient indigenous investment capital and lack of state-of-the-art, technological competence, the island archipelago has had to earn its keep by mainly advertising itself as an attractive base to others. Today’s ‘cargo’ – tourists, finance, pleasure craft, merchandise – has replaced the military strategists and colonial administrators of the not so distant past. Hence was born a dependence on a different interpretation of resourcefulness: the ingenuity, flexibility, skill and productivity
of the Maltese labour force for economic survival (Baldacchino, 1993a).

The other side of the coin is that this dependence requires to be complemented with an attitudinal compliance by labour to the promotional package. Prosperity and stability hinge crucially on the consent and accommodational responses of labour, both at the individual and the collective levels of organisation. Hence, there is an inbuilt concern, held by those in control of production, to reap a surplus and to maintain and increase the productivity and attraction of labour to outside sponsors.

The above is a concern universal to all systems of production; hence all economic systems can be envisaged as essentially systems of labour control (Harrod, 1986; Baldacchino, 1988a). The concept of labour control is used to refer to the construction, by no means automatic, of labour as a viable factor of production – responding positively to the demands and objectives of the economic system. Such labour control is typically engineered via a complex pattern of socialization, technology and managerial strategies, motivators and penalties.

Thus, while outwardly prosperous and stable, the enviable quality of life enjoyed by most Maltese today conceals a particular expression of labour control: A configuration between economy, politics and labour which I hold to be crucial to a proper and contextualized understanding of the practice of workers' participation and the control of labour (Zammit & Baldacchino, 1989).

Ensuring Labour Control

Obtaining the required condition of labour control is rather difficult owing to the disproportionate strength of individual and organized labour in the Maltese economy. Any Maltese policy maker has to face up to a series of hard facts: Firstly, the proportion of wage and salary dependents within the labour force is very generous: over a third of the population are wage and salary earners; secondly, the representation of such employees within labour unions is just as impressive. The implications of alienating even a fraction of this organised mass could be politically very damaging, given in particular the anxiously fine margin of votes separating partisan sympathies between the two main political parties. This would be the third hard fact. Labour,
the one main readily available source of wealth creation is thus a significant lobby both at the ballot box and behind the union banner. Rampant proletarianization, innate mineral poverty, neck-to-neck bipolar democratic politics and high union densities combine to produce a formidable people/worker power machine.

The same problematic had asserted itself to some extent during the centuries of fortress economy. In that context, loyalty was engineered for and by the colonising power by virtue of it becoming the only source of gainful employment to a rapidly expanding population (Baldacchino, 1988a; Zammit, 1984). Today, the political actors have changed but the pattern has stubbornly persisted. All post-independence Maltese governments have sought, perhaps more out of necessity than desire, to control Maltese labour covertly through appeasement. The tactics have included nationalistic belt-tightening appeals, charismatic leadership, state-trade union collaboration, prices and incomes policy and widespread employment in the public and parastatal sectors. These can all be construed as important and viable policy instruments of 'high trust relations' (Fox, 1974). That is, they constitute a particular form of labour control which is durable because it is based on consent rather than coercion. Hence, it does not generate resistance, resentment and, subsequently, costly industrial action, an insecure investment climate or electoral defeat.

**Proposal**

I propose that the issue of worker participation in Malta be considered as another important tactic in the context of the appeasement agenda. It is a powerful form of non-coercive labour control which concurrently promises to create a more cooperative and productive labour force, and offers the opportunity of experimenting with novel, social relations of production. Such a tactic was particularly entertained when the country's political leaders were faced with a very powerful trade union organisation and a not too certain economic future (Baldacchino, 1988a; Zammit, 1984).

**Non-Coercive Labour Control**

Not only is Malta's unionization rate – around 53% – easily in the world's top ten league for nation states today (Baldacchino,
The largest union within the local setup – the General Workers’ Union (GWU) – is in all probability the largest single trade union in the world, relatively speaking, counting within its ranks 11% of the total resident local population (Walls, 1989). This situation is probably due to the fact that trade union membership and recruitment is also a function of partisan political mobilisation whilst, at the same time, trade unions have made powerful inroads in public administration, manufacturing and large private market service establishments. Corporatist arrangements of some sort have in fact been in place ever and only since the setting up of the GWU in 1943 and the immediate astronomical increase in membership of this union. Over the years, these arrangements have included the Labour Coordination Committee (1945-49); the Malta Government Joint Council (1950-68); a close affinity by the GWU with the policies, practices and ideologies espoused by the Malta Labour Party (MLP) in office (1971-87); a statutory fusion between the GWU and the MLP (1978-92); and, most recently, participation on a National Economic Development Council, set up by the Nationalist Government in office since 1987, incorporating the latest incomes policy agreement initialled in December 1990 (Baldacchino, 1993b).

No wonder therefore that the first recorded instance of worker participation in decision making in Malta had already occurred in the early 1950s, when port workers (hard core GWU members) agreed to cooperate, manage and distribute both the work load and the fees collected for their services. The arrangement was formalised by the Port Workers’ Scheme of 1952 and updated by the Port Workers’ Ordinance of 1962 (Baldacchino et al., 1986).

No wonder also that the most far-reaching development in worker participation in Malta occurred at Malta Drydocks, still the country’s largest, if not also oldest, enterprise with 3,700 employees, 3% approximtely of the gainfully occupied population where levels of political activism and trade union consciousness reach record heights.

The introduction of worker participation at Malta Drydocks was incremental: German style co-determination (where equal numbers of directors were appointed by the GWU and Government, and where the Chairperson was acceptable to both) was introduced in 1971 soon after the MLP’s electoral victory. From 1975 onwards, the Drydocks Council started being completely elected.
by and from the workforce with the exception of the Chairperson, introducing the first and only experience of full worker self-management in Malta. Then in 1977, the first of eighteen departmental level worker committees signalled a further progressive refinement, decentralising the decision-making machinery down to the shop floor level (Baldacchino et al., 1986; Kester, 1980). In the early 1980s, the Council Chair started being nominated from among the elected council members and no longer from outside.

**Expansion...**

The introduction of full blown worker participation at the Drydocks was in all probability an *ad hoc* solution to what appeared to be a vicious circle of sour industrial relations and chronic bankruptcy (Portelli & Zammit, 1983). Indeed, both industrial peace and (for a short spell) profits were dramatically restored within a few years. In much the same pragmatic spirit, various forms of participatory management were ushered in by the MLP in the 1970s and early 1980s. These top-down initiatives bear the unmistakable stamp of Dom Mintoff, former MLP leader (1949-84) and former Prime Minister (1955-58; 1971-84).

While the establishment of a socialist society remained his foremost long-term objective, such a development could not, in Mintoff’s mind, take place without the achievement of national economic self-reliance through worker self-sacrifice and higher productivity. Not only did worker participation capture the essence of the socialist project; it was a pleasant departure from the confrontational and economically wasteful industrial relations practices which had plagued the country in previous years, practices which threatened its uncertain prospects after the appointment with the fateful day of destiny – the winding down once and for all of the fortress economy after 31 March 1979. It also permitted an acceptable *modus vivendi* between union and party, justifying the collaborationist policy of the GWU as a cost-effective strategy which secured gains for workers in line with national economic considerations. Inspired by the then remarkable experience of the Yugoslav self-managed economy, Mintoff signalled the go ahead for further novel arrangements, particularly in areas which were comfortably organised by the GWU (Kester, 1980; Zammit, 1984, *passim*).
A lone worker director was appointed to each of the boards of various public and parastatal corporations, usually following a nomination by the GWU. Management committees were set up within eighteen state-owned manufacturing companies, as well as within certain civil service departments. A number of producer cooperatives were also established following GWU backing, to find or preserve employment for discharged employees.

A number of worker sit-ins and take-overs in the private sector also took place, again mostly with the full backing (and, often, the outright instigation) of the GWU. In the late 1970s, these multiple initiatives across the board were being hailed as a veritable (perhaps hegemonic) transition to full worker self-management: then, almost one out of every three Maltese employees worked in an environment which had some formally constituted form of worker participation in place (Bayat, 1991; Kester, 1980).

...and Degeneration

Political and economic circumstances however precipitated starkly different results. The parastatal industries had run into financial difficulties. As a result, they were converted, fully or partly, to foreign or local private ownership. This meant the dismantling of all other than orthodox industrial relations practices. The civil service management committees were captured mainly by Confederation of Malta Trade Unions (CMTU) union activists, then engaged in a bitter and protracted struggle with the GWU. A power contest ensued between these non-GWU representatives and the responsible authorities, leading to a de facto winding up of these civil service participatory structures.

At Malta Drydocks, economic viability did not keep pace with innovations in democratic management. The enterprise had to fall back once again on state-guaranteed finances for its financial flows. And worker-managed enterprises in the private sector were generally temporary, stop-gap affairs: they reverted back, sooner rather than later, to private capital or were transformed into a form of public, state-owned corporation (Baldacchino, 1990, p. 101).

Thus, when the Nationalist Party assumed office in 1987, it inherited the residue of what had appeared to be, hardly a decade before, a fully fledged participatory economy in the making. The legacy included: Eight worker directors on the boards of eight
separate corporations (seven of which was state-owned); a self-managed Malta Drydocks which had reverted to chronic loss making in 1982; and three producer cooperatives (two of which were in the process of liquidation).

An Assessment

A sober assessment can be made today with the powerful advantage of hindsight. The so-called transition to industrial democracy in Malta was, not unexpectedly, introduced from above with the backing and inspiration of the Maltese Labour Movement – the MLP and the GWU. Perhaps because of this all too transparent partisan packaging, it was inevitably met with suspicion and disapproval by the civil service rank and file: moves to greater democracy in action were perceived (perhaps even construed?) as a threat to established non-GWU trade union interests and power relations. The transition moreover remained subordinate to economic considerations where international investment was involved. All in all, rather than having a spillover, expansionary and transformative effect – as was espoused by enthusiastic progressive academics and as evidenced from policy rhetoric – the outcome of the participatory experience, rather than an ambitious transition, can now be more aptly described as a corporatist and integrative strategy (Stephens, 1980).

Post 1987

Worker participation initiatives have taken an altogether different cast since 1987. Malta Drydocks and its militant employees (a headache for any party in power) have been placed in suspended animation with a multi-million, 10-year package deal (D.O.I., 1989); the number of worker-directors has not increased, though all directors which still exist are now in office on the basis of a free election. The pressure for innovative work relations, threatening to control other than through ownership, appears spent, a victim of passing fashion. Enticing more foreign investment has meant a more obvious policy orientation towards a stronger integration of the Maltese economy with satellite status into the capitalist world system (e.g. Camilleri, 1990). There is no urgency to experiment with participatory schemes: although an ongoing public sector
reform may be disposed to consider schemes which encourage autonomous work groups. Public employees enjoying security of tenure may also be allowed the space to self-manage specific projects awarded under competitive tendering (Parliamentary Secretariat for Human Resources, 1993). The CMTU, organising practically all workers not unionised within the GWU, has yet to press for its first worker director. The few developments to speak of, have been limited to experiences of partial employee shareholding, isolated profit sharing and the setting up of a few new producer cooperatives. These initiatives in no way threaten established power relations and in more ways than one actually consolidate the premise that only who owns, controls the predicament of work.

Nonetheless, this does not imply a regression to traditional industrial relations: Both the GWU and the CMTU have persevered, albeit with fits and starts, for three years, in an incomes policy accord with the other social partners, these being employers, Government and business interests. The inbuilt pressures towards corporatism remain; but these are today confined almost exclusively to superstructural arrangements. Their activation is far removed from the actual work environment.

Reinventing the Wheel

The retrenchment of trade unions away from the important arena of ‘shop floor participation’ may permit discourse on new forms of worker participation schemes, this time employer and management driven, to gain popularity. We have of late in Malta turned the spotlight on worker empowerment, job enlargement, quality circles, excellence teams and other devices intended towards the spectacular unleashing of the worker’s innate potential, the human resource development of individuals and groups. The promises of effective worker participation are being repropoosed and, in the process, repossessed. The discourse is now different. This ‘innovative management approach’ (BASE, 1993) is now advertised without the terminology which elicits threatening images of worker control, employee take overs, nationalisations and other communist chimeras now consigned to history.

We have so admirably reinvented the wheel: Workers have been rediscovered as ‘partners’ in the production process. Worker
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participation... oops! sorry; I mean employee commitment and involvement, is now a management slogan, exhorting employees to collaborate with the enterprise goals. The invasion of human capital theory into industrial relations is the new exciting issue. Labour has been upgraded almost overnight from another factor input, an energy pack, to a veritable resource, where the human factor, and all his/her assorted faculties, are now hailed as indispensable assets to organisational success (e.g. Barbara, 1990). Will this shift fuel a genuine (albeit often inadvertent) democratisation of power relations at the workplace? Or will it contribute to the 'participation strip-tease', systematically robbing workers of job security, minimum wage legislation, trade union representation and other gains which they have secured over many decades of mobilisation and collective action (Kester, 1991)?

Enter the Worker

But where is the worker in all this? Accounts of the Maltese participatory saga are too easily subsumed under the predetermined principles and objectives of econometric modelling and of powerful mass interest groups: trade unions, political parties, lay and religious pressure groups, civil bureaucracies, state, employer and business interests. All these remain important players and spokespersons within the project and they invariably dominate and mould the rampant discourse in accordance with a priori motives and ambitions. Every interest group seeks to make its voice heard; but the voices of the actors who perhaps matter most - those of the individual employees concerned - may be lost within the overall roar of confused noises.

This observation is a critique also of mainstream academic accounts of labour relations and trade union studies which do not dislodge themselves from the institutional paradigm. They remain narrow domains and avowedly technicist in orientation, failing to consider workers as other than members of collectivities: unions, social classes, party machines and other organisations (Cohen, 1991). Workers are considered as having neither an existence nor a will outside such boundaries; as if they never question the motives and declarations of the organisations within which they are enrolled.
Worker Perceptions

Some insights into the opinions and perceptions of Maltese workers on their participatory experience are at hand, thanks to the social science survey research pioneered by Gerard Kester (Kester, 1974) and subsequently by the Workers’ Participation Development Centre (WPDC) at the University of Malta. Having been closely associated with most of these research projects, I shall hereunder endeavour to encapsulate the dominant worker perceptions which have emerged to date concerning the phenomenon of worker participation in Malta. The aim is to tease out the main sociological strands to the issue, enabling an appraisal of the impact of the experiences.

a. Malta Drydocks Employees

Pride of place must definitely be assigned to Malta Drydocks employees. They remain the most intensely studied research population on this theme locally. In the most ambitious survey conducted on this topic so far in Malta, a representative sample of these employees have exposed a vision of cooperation, joint effort and internal harmony which is embodied in their working definition of participation. They envisage a scenario where Council, professional management, the GWU and the worker committees cooperate in the process of decision making when no differences of interest are at hand. The workforce appears generally satisfied with the participatory system and this overall satisfaction finds vent in positive attitudes with respect to other aspects of work. The development of ‘social objectification’, meaning a proper participatory culture and consciousness (Bernstein, 1976; Kester, 1980), is evidenced by strong demands for further power sharing and for a wider spread of information.

A number of exogenous factors colour the workers’ perceptions of the work environment. The economic crisis infesting the ship-repair industry generates a concern for job security, increasing effort and calls for greater efficiency. Social inequalities perceived to exist in the wider Maltese society tend to generate feelings of relative deprivation among the employees in relation to privileged social groupings. Finally, partisan politics is cited as another influential variable which acts both to create in-group interpersonal bonds and out-group hostility.
But perhaps the most powerful external variable influencing the Drydocks worker's frame of mind is a cultural one. A long colonial experience has led, *inter alia*, to the emergence of irresponsible trade union and political activism. Antagonism is thus a natural perceptual framework, further supported by the often unexpressed radical notion that different social groups have fundamentally irreconcilable and conflicting interests. Drydocks workers have after all formed the vanguard to this spirit of opposition and they owe their privileged position as a local 'aristocracy of labour' partly to the benefits accruing from such a historically sustained stance (Baldacchino et al., 1986; Baldacchino, 1984).

Such a long tradition, which has paid hefty dividends, is not easily curtailed, let alone replaced. From the trade union standpoint, this antagonistic perspective persists even more strongly because collective bargaining is the incarnation of antagonism. It remains the dominant instrument for negotiating conditions of work in local private industry. This means that both the workers and their union officials are bound to feel ill at ease in adopting the requirements of full worker self-management: accepting responsibility for decisions taken, concerning themselves with the viability and profitability of the firm, developing long-term expectations and goals, possibly accompanied by short-run sacrifices. Hence one comes across, for example, an ambivalent situation with regards to wages policy: relatively high, secure and fixed wage rates in a self-managed firm operating with chronic non-profitability (Baldacchino, 1989); a belief in the advantage of reverting to state management; a professional management which appears to be an uncomfortable bedfellow with the operant participatory structures (Portelli & Baldacchino, 1988; Smole-Grobovsek, 1986); a desire for a militant shop steward; substantial pressure for an equally militant, trade unionistic worker committee, which finds its extreme form when this committee is controlled by GWU shop stewards (Kester, 1986).

A stylistically elegant way of taking stock of this situation is to argue that there are two systems of decision making in place, based on two opposing sets of principles: one participative and one traditional (e.g. Baldacchino, 1984; Kester, 1986). But a more rational explanation can perhaps be based on the notion of the existence of an ambiguous multiplicity of channels, a 'polycentric
decision making structure' which can be manipulated differently by different workers (or by the same workers at different times) at will, all in the obvious pursuit of personal, interest satisfaction (Smole-Grobovsek, 1986). The condition is thus not so much one of role conflict but one of role diffusion and role confusion (ibid.). This "identity crisis" may prove convenient and indeed functional to those intent on manipulation (Baldacchino et al., 1986). The issue is not to determine whether the participatory system at the Drydocks is subsumed within the traditional us-them, capital-labour dualism, or vice versa. Rather, both of these may be subsumed and deftly assimilated within a culturally comfortable behaviour pattern which cultivates 'networks, manipulators and coalitions' (Boissevain, 1974). Within this framework, an immediate superordinate, a union steward and a worker committee member 'are equal potential candidates for patronage and social brokerage' (Baldacchino, 1994).

b. Worker Directors

Interestingly, a similar set of difficulties can be documented in a brief survey of the opinions and experiences of worker directors (Baldacchino, 1988b). The worker director owes his/her existence to a willingness, on the part of the GWU, to experiment with the appointment of representatives in this capacity in the mid-1970s (Zammit & Baldacchino, 1989). The status of the worker-director is, since 1987, based on an open franchise; but an indication of the crucial backing of the GWU is provided by the union's success in getting its nominee elected in every contest to date. The trade union support for the position may however prove to be its own undoing because it generates pressure on the candidate to behave, once in office, like a glorified shop steward. One ought to keep in mind that the electorate is primarily composed of union members and that the candidate usually already has a history of union activism. The invasion of the sanctity of the boardroom by rowdy trade union demands would naturally drive the other, non-elected board members to take corrective and defensive action, possibly isolating the worker representative still further. The latter's relative incapacity to act effectively is sealed by the absence of any adequate legal, institutional or educational machinery which somehow defines the specific terms of reference and equips him/her for the task at hand. The condition spirals precariously towards
oppositional trade unionism, domesticated collaborationism or else to a 'board with a board' situation which leaves the worker director in a policy limbo; the seat of decision making being stealthily moved away from his/her influence.

c. Private Sector Employees

My third and final example of participation as experienced by the grass roots is drawn from a case study of worker perceptions in a medium sized private firm. Since the fieldwork was confidential and the company is an ongoing concern, its identity had best remain undisclosed.

The flirtation with workplace democracy was once again a top-down initiative. The recommendation was made by the company’s executive director (a priest) who suggested introducing worker participation in management and profits on the agenda of a collective agreement which was being finalised. There was some enthusiasm, even concern, on the part of the workers, to start profit participation; but the eagerness cooled down dramatically when the company accounts revealed a series of regular losses.

The proposal to set up a workers’ committee, eventually paving the way to worker directors on the company board, took off with good intentions. There were, however, two hitches. On the one hand, the dominant personality of the executive director proved too difficult to live with. As the founder, ideator and manager of the company, he exercises paternalistic management with employees, most of whom he knows personally and intimately; he remains the hub and fulcrum of most human interactions within the company, on business as well as private matters. On the other hand, the incumbents of the participatory structures could not (perhaps did not want to) break this ‘small firm management syndrome’; this was, from the workers’ point of view, convenient because it spared them the burden of responsibilities and duties they had been obliged to accept by virtue of being shop floor representatives. When in this capacity, they had felt it their duty to come up with welfarist demands – fans, air conditioners, wage increases – which were summarily dismissed as impossible by the director. The agenda was strictly trade unionistic, the elected committee effectively replacing the trade union as the mouthpiece for worker demands. Lack of progress
reduced the relevance and interest in the participatory structures by all concerned. Participatory structures in session became useless, chat encounters. ‘Social objectification’ had not materialized. The participatory initiative was allowed to fold up after a year or so, the exasperated director refusing to continue what had become merely an institutionalised, time-consuming farce.

The Politics of Discourse

Despite a long history of armchair theorisation, and an almost equally long experience of assorted practices, we must humbly recognize that the term workers’ participation is highly ambiguous (Bayat, 1991; Roca & Retour, 1981). The concept has implications for workplace humanization, social justice, equity, industrial peace, worker flexibility and dignity, social partnership, self-discipline, economic efficiency and productivity boosts. It is precisely its amenability to all shades of ideology and intent that has allowed, in different conditions, the most disparate of interest groups to jockey for pride of place as standard-bearers of participation, seeking to enslave the concept and define it rigorously with a particular slant. As with the proverbial Indian fable, we are all touching the elephant. But, blinded by ideology, tradition, culture or pure self-interest, we prefer to point our finger at different attributes: The thick skin of worker self-management; the supple proboscis of worker empowerment; the ivory tusk of employee share ownership; the hairy ear of co-determination; the dangling tail of profit sharing.

A Strategy of Avoidance?

It seems that the complimentarity and interlocking nature of roles in a participatory situation has remained just as vague in Malta. Individual actors and powerful organisations have found themselves adrift in uncharted waters as they sought to fashion an alternative industrial relations system piecemeal. Admittedly, this was carried out in a pragmatic and unassuming manner which may have nipped in the bud significant resistance from established interest groups, as well as tapping generous popular support. Still, it left participatory initiatives amiss of a consistent ideology (Kester, 1980, Chap. 9). So while the pressure to participate
somehow remains, the organisations involved seem today much more disposed to do so in non-threatening, role comfortable ways: Labour control is understood in terms of union (rather than worker) participation, aloof and far removed from individual worker concerns and expectations which could get out of hand, which could rock established practices and power demarcations, which could scare foreign capital. It is as if, on the basis of local experiences, there is a definite clampdown to prevent a snowballing of exorbitant demands: participation in profits without participation in losses; participation in rights but not in duties; options for short-run concessions without long-run considerations. The absence of explicit policy measures directed towards building a direct relationship between effort and reward, along with the absence of supportive legal, educational and cultural baggage both undermine participative dynamics. These degenerate from potential mobilization and democratization to a socialization into traditional, defensive trade unionistic practices or else integrative managerial ploys. Simply put, more of the same.

The Challenge of Managerial Initiatives

But what about the challenge being posed to trade unions by employer and management initiatives in the participatory domain? If properly worked out, quality circles, excellence teams and other group-based participatory structures can be strengthened and legitimized with active trade union backing. Their agendas can be extended to incorporate other areas of competence – such as worker education, environmental protection, occupational health and safety and perhaps other issues so far viciously defended as sole managerial prerogatives (Kester & Pinaud, 1992; Baldacchino, 1993c). Such programmes appear to stand a better chance of success (whether measured by worker, labour or capital yardsticks) because they are based on a set of clearer provisos: both the trade union and professional management maintain their traditional checks and functions. Meanwhile, deterrents and joint stake-holding interests will minimise the likelihood that one of these parties will deploy the participatory organs to override or silence the other. These organs are also politically non-partisan and concern the rank and file employees. They can therefore be much closer to the experiential domain of
the workers who matter than other legalistic arrangements located somewhere aloof and far away in the institutionalised labour relations architecture.

The lessons of the past, at home and abroad, suggest that participation ought not to be envisaged as in lieu of traditional trade unionism. This either erodes professional managerial authority or else questions the very legitimacy of trade unionism. A powerful organisation to represent workers at the level of the firm, and a professional team driven by market logic and enterprise loyalties are both essential prerequisites. The participatory organs need to be juxtaposed next to these, rather than replacing any one to the presumed tactical advantage of the other. Perhaps crucially, both for the trade union and the company, such worker participation schemes could mean survival in today’s pragmatically driven and economically competitive world.

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