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Preface

The origins of this book go back to 1968, when I became a research officer in the Zambian Copper Industry Service Bureau. For one and a half years I watched two multinational mining corporations respond to the new Zambian regime, installed four years earlier. I was able to observe managerial decisions made in relation to both the union and the government. I was also able to study what was going on in the mines themselves when I fielded a large social survey of the labour force with Zambian personnel officers as interviewers. I subsequently moved to the University of Zambia, where for two and a half years I undertook the research that forms the empirical basis of Chapter Five of this book. During the summer of 1971 I was joined by Abel Pandawa, Nat Tembo and Tony Simusokwe.

While at the University of Chicago I again took a job in industry, this time as a machine operator in the engine division of a multinational corporation that I called Allied. Although management knew of my research interest, I was treated like any other worker. This was 1974, and I held the job for ten months. I told my fellow-workers that I was doing this for my PhD thesis, but they either didn't care or didn't believe me. This was certainly not their idea of a university education.

By a stroke of fortune I had followed in the footsteps of one of the most astute and experienced field workers to have passed through the University of Chicago. Donald Roy had been a radial drill operator in the same plant thirty years earlier. His studies of 'Geer' were not only a base of comparison but also an inspiration to my own work. Don Roy died in 1980, just as he was putting together thirty years of studying union organizing in North Carolina. He was one of the few sociologists who managed to straddle the world of the industrial worker and the world of the academic — although at considerable personal cost. The comparison of my own study with Don's is more fully worked out in *Manufacturing Consent*. Here, in Chapter Three, I am more con-

cerned to compare my study with that of another industrial sociologist with close connections to the working class. Tom Lupton's *On the Shop Floor*, a study of two Manchester factories, was as important for British industrial sociology as Don Roy's work was for American industrial sociology.

My interest in Hungary was first stimulated by Miklós Haraszti's book, whose English title is *A Worker in a Worker's State*. Like Don Roy and myself, Haraszti was a machine operator — a mill operator in 1971 in a Budapest tractor factory. His book is a remarkable literary piece, vividly capturing the trials and tribulations of a new machine operator. But the book generates a paradox: life at Red Star appears much more despotic than what Don Roy, Tom Lupton or I found in our shops. And this flies in the face of conventional wisdoms about work in Soviet societies, where the absence of significant unemployment, the difficulty of firing, and the common interests binding workers and managers together in opposition to central administration have supposedly made for a more relaxed tempo on the shopfloor. I have been going to Hungary to find out how the system Haraszti describes is possible, and how widespread it is. In the fall of 1983 I worked in a champagne factory and a small textile factory, and in the summer of 1984, for two months, I worked as a radial drill operator in a machine shop similar to the ones at Allied and Red Star. My experiences there inform my resolution of Haraszti's paradox in Chapter Four.¹

The essays in this book begin from working-class experiences inside the factory. As an academic who would be returning to the university after serving his time on the shopfloor, it has not always been easy to interpret those experiences. Without the workers who were willing to allow me to enter their lives as well as show me the ropes, the accounts that follow would never have been possible. I cannot say that my life on the shopfloor was a permanent joy, but that it was at all bearable and at times amusing was due to the social inventiveness of my companions.

I have also accumulated debts outside the mines and factories. Apart from introducing me to anthropology and sociology, Jaap van Velsen was the first to impress upon me the importance of studying actually existing socialism instead of postulating some utopia in which all the evils attributed to capitalism miraculously disappear. At Chicago I had the fortune of continuing dialogue, friendship and teaching of Adam Przeworski. For good or evil, he turned my Fanonite Marxism into a more respectable structuralism. Since coming to Berkeley I have become more sceptical of structuralist

claims. The strains of critical Marxism, originally due to Margaret Cerullo, are most apparent in Chapter One. Whenever I veered too far in the humanist direction, Erik Wright was always on hand to try and set me on the scientific path once again. Throughout the last six years he has been a source of unfailing encouragement and criticism. He has read and commented on all parts of this book, not just once but many times.

Students at Berkeley have had to endure a lot. A number tolerated my reduction of Marxism to a silence — a silence about the politics of production. Undoubtedly, much that I have learned from them has found its way into this book. In particular, Tom Long has been my patient guide in theory and philosophy for the last eight years. During 1982-83 I benefited from discussions in the 'Class Analysis and Historical Change Program' at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Three institutions have sponsored my research. The Southern African Research Program at Yale provided me with a semester's support in 1980. The Institute of International Studies at Berkeley financed a six-month trip to Hungary and Poland in 1983. In Hungary I was a guest of the Institute of Sociology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. There László Cseh-Szombathy, Elemér Hankiss, Laci Bruszt, Csaba Makó, János Lukács, Péter Galasi and Gábor Kertesi all helped to make my stays in Hungary fruitful and enjoyable. Ivan Szelényi and Robi Manchin started it all, and they continue to provide encouragement as well as intellectual and practical guidance.

Apart from those mentioned above, a number of people have commented on different parts of this book: David Plotke, Ruth Milkman, Leonard Thompson, Stanley Greenberg, Amy Mariotti, Colin Leys, Mahmood Mamdani, Jeff Haydu, Carol Hatch, Steve Frenkel, Vicki Bonnell, Isaac Cohen, Reggie Zelnik, Chuck Tilly, Ron Aminzade, Maurice Zeitlin, Perry Anderson, Mike Davis, John Myles, Leo Panitch and Wally Goldfrank. I am grateful to them all, and to Gretchen Franklin, whose political criticisms never interfered with her immaculate editing and typing. I am indebted to anonymous referees of the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *American Sociological Review* as well as the editorial boards of *Politics and Society* and *Socialist Review*. Finally, I should like to pay tribute to the late Alvin Gouldner. In large part, this book is an extended dialogue with his *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*. Although I never met him, he more than any other contemporary theorist captivated my interest in sociology. In whatever directions my studies lead, I always discover that he's been there before me.