

**TRADE UNION PRAXIS - 4
(Towards a Sociology of Trade Unions)**

**MODALITIES OF THE ALIENATION OF
THE WORKING CLASSES**

By

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WP878



WP
1990
(878)

W P No. 878

July 1990

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THE WORKING CLASSES

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JULY 1990

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TRADE UNION FRAXIS - 4

(Towards a Sociology of Trade Unions)

4.1 WORK ORGANIZATION AND WORKER ALIENATION

The experience of the alienation of the working classes could be analyzed in the context of the relations of production given the mode of production as well as in the context of production relations. The concept of 'relations of production' refers to the particular method of appropriation of surplus value which goes hand in hand with a specific mode of production. For instance, within the capitalist mode of production, the system of wage labour constitutes the relations of production. The system of wage labour, therefore, becomes the basis of the alienation of the working classes. It must also be remembered that within every mode of production and relations of production there are production relations - the technical, behavioural and managerial aspects. Thus production relations understood as the technical, behavioural and managerial relations in production while being determined by the mode of production within which they operate also contribute to the modalities of the alienation of the working classes. Thus, the alienation of the working classes have to be analyzed both in the context of the prevailing relations of production as well as in the context of the concomitant production relations.

The phenomenon of alienation has been a subject of theoretical and empirical analysis in the long history of

sociological endeavours. As a matter of fact, the volume of works related to alienation is so formidable that the task of achieving clarity in defining alienation as a concept and the process of operationalization of the concept is daunting. There can be no doubt, however, that the concept of alienation is an inextricable portion of the richest sociological traditions. The founding fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber have all made their indelible contributions to the understanding of the concept. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that the Marxist use of the concept of alienation is "the principal channel by which the word itself reached twentieth century writing".¹ Marx's definition of the concept of alienation is of relevance to day even though there have been studies to the effect that a significant shift has appeared to occur with respect to the nature and locus of the concept between the 1900s and 1950s.² Whereas there was estrangement from social systems experienced as oppressive in the earlier period, now there is the conformity of man to social values and pressures leading to inauthenticity (White³ ; Reisman⁴ ; Etzioni⁵ ; Seaman⁶). There is not only "worker" alienation but also alienation of white collar employees and managers. As Fromm⁷ notes, "alienation has become the fate of the vast majority of people..... It pervades the relationship of man to his work, to the thing he consumes.... to his fellow man and to himself". Nevertheless, the concept of alienation as enunciated by Marx is essential to an understanding of the roots of alienation. For Marx, work is the central reference point of history. "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life

process in general. It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness".⁸ For Marx, the productive life, the free, conscious activity of man is the "species-character", of human beings. The object of work then becomes the realization of man's species-life: through work man reproduces himself not only intellectually, in consciousness, but actively in what he makes. But his working life under the capitalist mode of work organization is not characterized by this conscious, free, creative activity. It is, as Marx saw, characterized by alienation.

4.2 THE MARXIST CONCEPT OF ALIENATION

A deeper understanding of the concept of alienation can be achieved only by delving deep into the roots of the concept of alienation in Marx's writings. This leads us inevitably to the writings of two philosophers who influenced Marx deeply -- Hegel and Feuerbach. Early studies of the theories of Marx were based on his writings on politics, society and economic founded on the social and economic doctrines of Froudhon, Adam Smith and other economists. But recent writings, following upon the publication of Marx's Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 in which Marx enunciates his philosophical concept of man, concede that Hegel and Feuerbach have had a profounder influence on Marx.

Marx's view of man-the-worker was rooted in the humanistic Western philosophical tradition which reaches from Spinoza through the French and German enlightenment philosophers of the

eighteenth century to Fichte and Hegel - the very essence of which is concern for man and a concomitant concern for the realization of his potentialities. And among the numerous philosophers who influenced Marx, no one can dispute the influence of Hegel's philosophical method and philosophical presuppositions on Marx.

According to Hegel, the supreme reality is Spirit or the Absolute; any finite being, including man, is only an aspect of the developing being of the absolute itself. In order for the Spirit to become conscious of itself, it must express itself, it must assume various concrete forms. This is both a knowing activity and a productive activity. The terms used by Hegel to denote this process is "self-externalization".

The two spheres of the Spirit's self-externalization -- nature and history -- are of paramount importance. As an active agent in history, man is Spirit in the historical continuation of its creative, self-externalization phase. But in his capacity as knower, he is self-conscious spirit. The Spirit's activity of self-externalization by which an object external to it is formed is also a state of self-alienation. The overcoming of alienation is possible by the Spirit's knowing activity. Thus the Spirit's realizing itself is dialectical according to Hegel. "The emergence of contradiction is the motive force, as it were, of the dialectical movement". It is the existence of contradiction in things and in concepts which impels history on towards development, "The conflict of opposed concepts and the resolution

of the conflict in a synthesis which itself gives rise to another contradiction is the feature which drives the mind restlessly onwards towards an ideal term, on all-embracing synthesis, the complete system of truth"¹¹. The three phases of development in Hegel or the Hegelian triad are: Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis. The self-realization of the Universal Spirit takes place in history following the law of dialectics, in which the thesis is relieved by the antithesis and the antithesis by the synthesis.

The discussion of Hegelian thought is cursory but it highlights the philosophical presuppositions that history is a process, man is dynamic and the historical process is a dialectic movement in triads of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. In Hegel's system, the Spirit's activity takes the three forms of externalization, alienation and the transcendence of alienation by the act of knowing. In these ideas of Hegel are the roots of Marxian thought and methodology in relation specially to man-the-worker as man-alienated-from-work.

If Marx claimed to have turned Hegel's dialectic "inside out" by transforming his historical idealism into historical materialism. It was Feuerbach who helped him make the transition through his critique of Christianity. "Then came Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity. With one blow it pulverized the contradiction. In that without circumlocutions. It placed materialism on the throne again....."¹². Feuerbach accomplished this by analyzing religion in relation to alienation. "Thus Feuerbach made use of the notion of alienation in his study of Christianity. He set out to show that the essence of religion was

the essence of man himself projected outside himself and reified or personified. The powers and capacities, the divine was nothing but the law of man's nature"¹³. Feuerbach borrowed the term from Hegel who used it to express the act of knowing which operates on an object standing outside itself, alien to the subject. For Feuerbach, god is man in a state of alienation. It follows that man can overcome alienation only through emancipation from religion. "Feuerbach starts out from the fact of religious self-alienation, the duplication of the world into a religious world and a secular one. His work consists in resolving the religious world into its secular basis"¹⁴. Marx thus accepts Feuerbach's basic premise but goes deeper in his analysis of the socio-economic basis of religious alienation. "Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations"¹⁵. While Feuerbach analyzed alienation in relation to religious life alone, Marx transferred the concept to the analysis of economic life.

Looking at Hegel through Feuerbach, Marx discovered one fundamental error in Hegel's alienation theory. Both its appearance of self-externalization and the transcendence of it by self-realization are only a theory of the production of abstract thought. Since mind is for Hegel the true essence of man, he conceives religion, wealth and similar social phenomena as spiritual entities. "When, for instance, wealth, state power, etc., are understood by Hegel as entities estranged from the human being, this only happens in their form as thoughts.... They

are thought entities, and therefore merely an estrangement of pure, i.e., abstract, philosophical thinking.... the whole process therefore ends with absolute knowledge.... The whole history of the alienation process and the whole process of the retraction of the alienation is therefore nothing but the history of the production of abstract thought -- of logical, speculative, thought". Marx, through Feuerbach, inverted Hegel and in the same analytical movement went beyond both Hegel and Feuerbach.

Thus the discussion of the philosophical roots of Marx has shown that the Marxian view of alienated man has its origins in Hegel and Feuerbach. We can now turn to Marx's formulation of the concept of alienated man.

There are a few passages to Marx's writings which provide insights into his concept of alienation. The first passage raises a basic issue related to the attitude taken by political economy to the worker: "It goes without saying that the proletarian, i.e., the man who, being without capital and rent, lives purely by labour, and by a one-sided abstract labour, is considered by political economy only as a worker. Political economy can therefore advance the proposition that the proletarian, the same as any horse, must get as much as will enable him to work. It does not consider him when he is not working as a human being". The above passage, interpreted in terms of traditional sociology, conceptualizes the relationship between capital and worker as a "secondary relationship". Traditional sociology uses various terms to represent this type of relationship-- "Gesellschaft", "organic solidarity",

"rational association" . The basic idea in all these conceptualizations is that the relationship between capital and worker is based more on contract rather than status, that the relationship is partial rather than holistic and that the relationship is specific-aim based rather than sentiment-based. The crucial difference between Marx's formulation of the relationship and the above formulations is that the former also specifies a dominance-submission relationship between capital and worker. Capital is vested with powers to the extent to which the worker is divested of power.

It is the analysis of the relationship between capital and worker which impels Marx to ask, "what in the evolution of mankind is the meaning of the reduction of the greater part of mankind to abstract labour?" .

The answer to this question is to be found in Marx's analysis of religion. Man is by essence a Creator. But in concrete, historical contexts, the creative urge in man is crushed, mutilated, maimed. Man then projects his essence outside himself in the realm of phantasy -- and calls it god. This god created by man in his image begins to dominate and enslave him. "Man makes religion. religion does not make man. religion indeed is man's self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not found himself or has already lost himself again . It is this experience which symbolizes man's alienation. "Just as in religion, the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, of the human brain and the human heart operates independently of him, that is, operates as an alien, divine or

diabolic activity -- so is the worker's activity not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self. ²³ Again, Marx says, "It is the same as in religion. ²⁴ The more man puts into god, the less he retains in himself. Thus religion for Marx is an experience of the alienation of man. Religion is the experience of and the simultaneous protest against his own powerlessness in the context of man's socio-economic praxis. "Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and also the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. ²⁵ It is the opium of the people". Thus Marx's analysis of religious man becomes the prototype of the alienation and powerlessness of man-the-worker. "The immediate task of philosophy which is at the service of history once the holy form of self-estrangement has been unmasked is to unmask self-estrangement in its unholy forms. ²⁶

Marx then proceeds to analyze alienation in the context of work and working conditions. "What then constitutes the alienation of labour? First, the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his intrinsic nature: that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind He feels at home when he is not working and when he is working he does not feel at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced

labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague.... Lastly, the external character of labour for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another"²⁷.

The passage quoted above is self-explanatory. The alienation of the worker consists in a complex of factors:

1. That work is external to the worker. It does not flow from his own creativity, from his own volition, from his own aspirations. The politico-economic structure of the work environment divests the worker of his power to control the modalities of his working life.
2. Work is forced on the worker because of the urgent need for satisfying his various survival needs. Work itself is not the satisfaction of a need but merely a means.
3. As a worker, he surrenders his freedom to the capitalist and to impersonal market forces in return for wages. His condition amounts to wage slavery.
4. The alienated worker therefore has no control over what work he has to do, what his work is going to produce and also over the structure and processes enveloping his working

life. He, on the contrary, through his work, creates power structures and processes which in turn contribute relentlessly to his own oppression and exploitation.

Thus, the Marxian picture of the alienated worker is a picture of loss of worker control over work processes, of exploitation and expropriation, of ultimate estrangement from all that is human and creative in the worker. The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him. It means that the life he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien".

The worker, through his alienation, is both the cause and effect of bringing into existence both the capitalist as well as private property. "Through estranged, alienated labour then, the worker produces the relationship of this labour to a man alien to labour and standing outside it. The relationship of the worker to labour creates the relation to it of the capitalist (or whatever one chooses to call the master of labour). Private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequences of alienated labour, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself. The worker through his work brings into existence both the "lord of the object" as well as the value of the object and in the process is himself dispossessed, debased, despoiled.

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Mills echoes Marx's views in his writings: "In almost any job, this employee sells a degree of his independence; his working life is within the domain of others: the level of his skills that are used and the areas in which he may exercise independent decisions are subject to management by others..... The objective alienation of man from the product and the process of work is entailed by the legal framework of modern capitalism and the modern division of labour. The worker does not own the product or the tools of his production. In the labour contract, he sells his time, energy and skill into the power of others"³¹. The worker's loss of control over his work structure and processes therefore seems to be an inevitable consequence of the capitalist politico-economic framework.

The message in these passages rings clear and true. "As I interpret Marx's discussion, he was concerned with the workers' loss of control over the means of production not only for its economic and political import, but also because it signified workers' loss of control over the essential conditions of their working lives. When one sells his labour to an employer instead of working for himself, and when one makes a standardized part instead of an entire entity, he loses control over the "product" of his labour. One can also lose control over the process of his labour -- by having to do work that does not engage his interests or challenge his abilities."³²

Thus the roots of alienation yield the notions that the worker experiences alienation mainly as powerlessness as

evidenced by his loss of control over the product and the processes of his work. The worker also experiences self-estrangement while performing work which neither interests him nor fulfills him. Work for the self-estranged worker is not a need but a means for fulfilling other needs.

4.3 BEHAVIOURAL APPROACHES TO ALIENATION

The concept of alienation has also been discussed in the works of other classical sociologists although their views are at variance with Marx's views. "It is Weber's views that capitalism and socialism are both manifestations of a far more fundamental force in western society. This force is rationalisation, the conversion of social values and relationship from the primary, communal and traditional shapes they once held to the larger, impersonal and bureaucratized shapes of modern life." ³³ Max Weber's preoccupation was with the growth and intensification of bureaucracy, the essence of which is rationalization of labour-management relationships, of government, religion and culture. While rationalization leads to liberation from traditional institutions and value systems, ultimately this leads to its own nemesis. "The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization, and, above all, by the disenchantment of the world." ³⁴ This "disenchantment" resulting from rationalization had a salutary effect in critically analyzing traditional structure, but "threatens now to become, not creative and liberating, but mechanizing, regimenting, and ultimately, reason-destroying" ³⁵. Max Weber's analysis of

rationalization leads to an analysis of disenchantment and its effects on individuals. Weber, in the closing section of his "Politics as Vocation" quotes from the nineteenth century dirge, "The city of Dreadful Night" : "Not summer's bloom lies ahead of us, but rather a polar night of icy darkness and hardness. When this night shall have slowly receded, who of those for whom Spring apparently has bloomed so luxuriously will be alive? And what will have become of all of you then? Will you be bitter or banalistic? Will you simply and dully accept world and occupation?"³⁶ . The sense of disenchantment in the context of rationalization is captured poignantly in this passage. The concept of "disenchantment" conjures up notions of self-estrangement and even a sense of meaninglessness.

Emile Durkheim discerned the emergence of human isolation and anomie in the midst of a social order crumbling before the forces of modernization. "Collective discipline in its traditional form has lost its authority...."³⁷ . Again, he says, ".....progress does not greatly increase our happiness, since the latter decreases, and in very great proportions, at the very moment when the division of labour is developing an energy and rapidity never know before"³⁸ . Thus the pathological consequences of the breakdown of "mechanical solidarity" based on social homogeneity leads to organic solidarity based on division of labour and social heterogeneity. Society experiences anomie with the destruction of the bastions of morality and community. Liberation from the shackles of mechanical solidarity leads inevitably to

the bondage of organic solidarity. This leads to a stage of normlessness. "The loss limited one feels the more intolerable all limitations appear" .
39

Thus classical sociology emerging in the crucible of industrialization and mechanization dwelt at length on the concept and phenomenon of alienation. Social, economic and political conditions lead inexorably to the experience of alienation -- powerlessness and self-estrangement (Marx), normlessness and socio-cultural isolation (Durkheim) and disenchantment (Max Weber).

In spite of the intensive and extensive treatment of the concept of alienation during the past three decades, there is still a great deal of difficulty in providing a clear and conceptual apparatus for the empirical sociological investigation of the concept. A survey of literature related to important contributions to the conceptual understanding and the empirical investigation of the concept of alienation hopefully will provide insights into the concept as a basis for considering the modalities of the shift from reactivity to proactivity.

Large-scale industrialization along capitalist lines, complex urban development and the increasing bureaucratic strangle-hold on modern man led to the study of the social factors conditioning personality types especially highlighting the insecurity and the disorientation discernible in man's life .
40-41
Erich Fromm, especially in "The Sane Society", suggests a description of Alienation which is close to that of

Marx. Fromm bemoans the reification of man as a result of the loss of his own creativity and autonomy leading to his dependence on external forces.

⁴²
Srole picked up the thread from the Durkheim tradition and constructed an index for anomia or normlessness. Much of the later empirical studies related to anomie based themselves on Srole's definition of anomia as "self-to-other-alienation"⁴³.

⁴⁴
Nettler after reviewing various definitions of alienation adopted for his study one facet of alienation -- "the feeling of estrangement from society"⁴⁵. Nettler constructed a scale through an elaborate procedure consisting of model building, attitude discerning interviews, scale construction, data collection, analysis and interpretation. His 17-item scale was designed to measure the dimension of estrangement from society. Nettler hypothesizes that alienation is related to creativity, mental-emotional disorder, altruism, tendency to suicide, chemical⁴⁶ addictions, maladjustment in marriage and criminal behaviour.

⁴⁷
Hannah Arendt asserted that alienation is not merely a concept but a perspective which can very well serve to comprehend the human condition in its dehumanized form.

⁴⁸
Seeman expounded his classical analysis of the historical uses of the concept of alienation and he demonstrated that five distinguishable uses of the term can be discerned, powerlessness, self-estrangement, normlessness, social isolation (or cultural estrangement) and meaninglessness.⁴⁹ A detailed discussion of Seeman's classification will be made at this point in the survey

in order to highlight its potential for providing a basis for the present study given the broader industrial relations perspective of a power struggle between labour and management to gain control over the work environment and work processes.

Seeman's paper seeks to accomplish two tasks : to present an organized view of the uses that have been made of this concept; and to provide an approach that ties the historical interest in alienation to the modern empirical effort . In this endeavour, Seeman makes an attempt to come to grips with certain issues related to the various modalities of alienation:

- the extent to which individuals or groups of individuals are included or excluded in the processes of control over either the broader social system or micro organizational systems.
- the extent to which individuals, or groups find meaning in decisions related to their existence irrespective of whether they are involved or not involved in the processes of control
- the extent to which individuals or groups have to resort to socially unapproved means to achieve goals at the societal or micro organizational level.
- the extent to which individuals or groups accept or reject goals or values which are highly rated in society or in an organization.

- the extent to which the individual finds work itself as a source of satisfaction as opposed to viewing work as a means for satisfying needs.

Thus, we find Seeman discussing five alternative meanings of alienation drawn from various sources in the sociological tradition. "A concept that is so central in sociological work, and so clearly laden with value implications, demands special clarity".

The first of these two uses refers to alienation in the sense of "powerlessness". Seeman says that this notion of alienation derives from the Marxian tradition. "This is the notion of alienation as it originated in the Marxian view of the Worker's condition in capitalist society : the worker is alienated to the extent that the prerogative and means of decision are expropriated by the ruling entrepreneurs" ⁵¹. Thus the shutting out of the worker from decision-making processes in a productive enterprise becomes an experience of alienation for the worker. Marx himself has said that the wage labourer is alienated from the product, from the process of production, from the community of direct producers and ultimately from himself. He has time and again expressed his concern about the worker's loss of control over the production process. "Marx, to be sure, was interested in other alienative aspects of the industrial system; indeed, one might say that his interest in the powerlessness of the worker flowed from his interest in the

consequences of such alienation in the workplace -- for example, the alienation of man from man, and the degradation of man into commodities" .

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A work organization consisting of individuals is not a collection of isolated individuals but it is a human community with a social dimension. When this social dimension of a work organization is ignored by the formation of antagonistic structures and processes by which a whole group of individuals are kept out of the processes of control in organizations the result is alienation from the goals of the organization as well as from the means adopted by the organization to attain these goals. The individual then feels "powerless", feels "that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks" .

53

A second major usage of the alienation concept is the idea of meaninglessness. "We may speak of high alienation, in the meaninglessness usage, when the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe-when the individual's minimal need for meaning is not met" .

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Those who own or control a work organization have absolute access to information related to the goals, means, structures, operations and processes in the organization. They also control access to the information and the processes of decision-making in organizations. The working class has little or no access to information related to vital organizational issues. This leads to an experience of

meaningless. "This second version of alienation is logically independent of the first, for, under some circumstances, expectancies for personal control of events may not have concomitant control over them. This is not to say that "powerlessness" and "meaninglessness" are not related. In a sense, if understanding of events is prevented by those who control the organization, the experience of "powerlessness" becomes all the more pronounced, ".....In some important degree, the view that one lives in an intelligible world may be a prerequisite of expectancies for control; and the unintelligibility of complex affairs is presumably conducive to the development of high expectancies for external control (that is, high powerlessness) .

The third variant of the alienation theme is derived from Durkheim's description of "anomie" and refers to a condition of normlessness. "In the traditional usage, "anomie" denotes a situation in which social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behaviour" ⁵⁷ . Social norms govern every organization and also have a control effect on the individuals in the organization. But the estrangement of the individual from the organization could lead to the flouting of social norms which could be viewed as a conscious or unconscious protest against the organizational norms. Under such circumstances, "the technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, becomes typically preferred to institutionally prescribed conduct" ⁵⁸ . Individuals do what they think is right rather than what the

organization prescribes as right. Consequently, the individual begins to perform actions which he could not perform by the social norms in the organization. The control of the individual and the lack of intelligibility of the decisions in the organization are independent of "the high expectancy that socially unapproved behaviours are required to achieve goals" ⁵⁹. But then again, the very fact that the individual feels convinced that he should do what he should not be doing to achieve his goals is an indication of the powerlessness of the individual in matching legitimate means to legitimate goals.

The fourth type of alienation in Seeman's delineation of alienation uses refers to isolation (or cultural estrangement). The concept of isolation is not to be mixed up with notions of introversion or lack of social or emotional adjustment. "The alienated in the isolation sense are those who, like the intellectual, assign low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society". The socially isolated or the culturally estranged individual is that individual whose values, attitudes, ideology is at variance with that which is widely prevalent in the given society. For instance, an individual who believes that workers have a right to use the strike weapon would be culturally estranged in a given society which denies the right to strike to the working class. ⁶⁰ Robert Marton, in his article on "Social Structure and Anomie" has referred to an adjustment pattern which he terms "rebellion". According to Seeman, the notion of "rebellion" in Marton's scheme approximates to what he himself terms as "Social Isolation". In

Marton's own words, "this adaptation (rebellion) leads men outside the existing social structure and seem to bring into being a new, that is to say, a greatly modified social structure. It presupposes alienation from reigning goals and standards".⁶¹ The socially isolated is not only saying no to an existing system but in the very act of negating the existing system conjures up a new system, a new structure. The act of negation, therefore, is closely linked to the loss of control over the system. The act of negation of any political theorist or activist cannot be divorced from his search for more humane, more just, more equal social structures.

The final variant of alienation discussed by Seeman is the "self-estrangement" usage. Seeman himself admits though that it is very difficult to distinguish this variant of alienation from the other meanings. When Mills,⁶² Fromm⁶³ and Reissman⁶⁴ refer to the estrangement of a human being from his self, they appear to be evaluating the human condition in relation to some ideal human condition. Marx too has referred to the phenomenon of man's estrangement from self "which is generally characterized as the loss of intrinsic meaning or pride in work, a loss which Marx and others have held to be an essential feature of modern alienation"⁶⁵. One way to state such a meaning is to see alienation as "the degree of dependence of the given behaviour upon anticipated future rewards, that is, upon rewards that lie outside the activity itself".⁶⁶ This notion of alienation is connected with the other usages. An individual who experiences powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness and social isolation

is not going to experience work in an organization as intrinsically satisfying, but is going to experience work as suffering, as unavoidable drudgery and is going to work only because work will provide the means for satisfying his other needs.

Seeman's description of the various alienation usages has contributed to the operationalization of the concept of alienation. He himself has stated what could be the likely thrust of empirical studies of alienation -- "Presumably, a task for subsequent experimental or analytical research is to determine (a) the social conditions that produce these five variants of alienation or (b) their behavioural consequences".⁶⁷

There have been several other studies in the alienation tradition. Clark⁶⁸ defined alienation as "the degree to which man feels powerless to achieve the role he has determined to be rightfully his in specific situations".⁶⁹ Clark's contribution to alienation studies was his view that alienation can be studied best within a specific social system rather than within the broader framework of society - "A more rewarding approach to the problem of measuring alienation might be the single unit approach, selecting for study only those whom we can establish to be involved in a single-well-defined unit, for instance, a social system".⁷⁰ The social system which Clark took up for his study was the membership of an agricultural cooperative organization. Scales were constructed for "alienation", for "satisfaction" experienced by the individual in the working of the cooperative,

for "knowledge" about the organization. There was a lower correlation between alienation and participation in the organization and alienation and knowledge about the organization.⁷¹

⁷² Bell once again examined the concept of alienation in the Marxian tradition by returning to the roots of Marxism -- the writings of the historical Marx -- a path which we have trodden already in the early parts of this chapter.

⁷³ Dean studied alienation empirically with reference to three major components -- powerlessness, normlessness and social isolation -- drawing from Seeman's description of the various usages of alienation. "Theorists have suggested numerous possible correlates of alienation such as apathy, political hyperactivity, personalization in publics, prejudice, privatization, psychosis, regression and suicide".⁷⁴ Dean then goes on to construct a 24-item scale for alienation for the purpose of his study. He found that there was a low but statistically negative correlation between the three components of alienation and rural background. There was a small positive correlation between alienation and advancing age.⁷⁵

⁷⁶ McDill made an attempt at finding out whether there is a relationship between alienation, authoritarianism, prejudice and socio-economic status. He also made an attempt to factor analyse the alienation domain.

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Pearlin developed a measure of alienation from work and tried out the measure in his study of nursing personnel. An additional significance of the study is that he studies alienation of a group of homogeneous individuals with reference to their occupational background given the general trend that most alienation studies view alienation as a human condition in the broader context of society.

78
Middleton studied the relationship between alienation, race and education. He found high intercorrelations among the scales constructed for the various dimensions of alienation as delineated by Seeman alluded to earlier.

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Neal and Rettig studied manual and non-manual workers in relation to the various dimensions of alienation. They also contributed to the area of factor analysis of alienation with a view to establishing the multidimensionality of alienation.

After Seeman's classic categorization of the different dimensions of alienation, there have been several sporadic attempts at refining the conceptualization of alienation inspired mainly by the allegation that the concept of alienation is extraordinarily vague and ambiguous. In fact, Israel has shown the main problem is the highly questionable theoretical utility of retaining as an analytic concept a term which such varied nuances of meaning.

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Horowitz⁸⁹ took up the cudgels against Feuer⁹⁰ who called for the alienation of the concept on the grounds that it is unscientific and merely metaphorical. Horowitz, however, expended his efforts in demonstrating that alienation is a concept imbued with the potential and versatility for analyzing the human condition. Nevertheless the controversy about the concept rages on as is evident from the number of theorists who have applied their minds to clarifying the concept.⁹¹⁻⁹⁷

There are also some empirical studies related to worker alienation which could contribute to the understanding of the concept for the purpose of this study. They are the studies carried out by Aiken and Hage,⁹⁸ Seeman,⁹⁹ Bonjean and Micheal,¹⁰⁰ Anderson¹⁰¹ and Kohn¹⁰².

¹⁰³
Aiken and Hage have made a comparative study of the sources and modalities of alienation in various structural properties of organizations and the various dimensions of alienation. They developed indices for "centralization" in terms of hierarchy of authority and in terms of participation in decision-making in the respective organizations. They also developed indices for "formalization" in terms of job codification and role observation. Indices for alienation from work and from expressive relations in the organizations were also developed. This study is illuminating both from the methodological point of view for the indices developed for alienation and from the theoretical point of view for studying alienation from work and alienation from expressive relations within the organization.

Seeman¹⁰⁴ analyzed the personal consequences of alienation at work. From a general application of alienation to man in the broader context of society, Seeman made an attempt to apply the concept to analyze man as a worker. The index developed by Seeman is of interest in the context of developing an index of alienation from work organizations.

The study carried out by Bonjean and Michael¹⁰⁵ and the reactions of Anderson¹⁰⁶ to the study focus on relationship between alienation and bureaucracy in the tradition of Weber's description of the working of bureaucracies.

Yet another interesting study was carried out by Kohn¹⁰⁷ in which he examined the relationship between occupational structure and alienation. Kohn's study takes up for testing two related hypotheses suggested by Marx's analysis of the occupational sources of alienation— one stressing control over the product of one's labour, the other emphasizing control over the work process. Utilising data from a sample survey of U.S. males employed in civilian occupations, the study concludes that in large scale capitalist systems, control over the product of one's labour (ownership and hierarchical position) has only an indirect effect on alienation whereas control over work process (closeness of supervision, routinization and substantive complexity) has an appreciably direct effect on powerlessness, self-estrangement and normlessness.

Kohn's discussion on the concept of alienation draws heavily on Seeman's classification. He recognizes the utility of the concept of alienation on the one hand—"despite its ambiguity of meaning, alienation is an appealing concept, standing as it does at the intersection of social-structural conditions and psychological orientation"¹⁰⁸. On the other hand Kohn is not oblivious to the limitations of the concept - "... one must face the fact that in social-psychological usage, alienation is an extraordinarily vague and imprecise term"¹⁰⁹. While there is vast literature on the social-structural and subjective aspects of alienation, according to Kohn the phenomenon has been rarely subjected to empirical analysis. Thus Kohn studied the relationship between occupational structure and alienation and found that factors related to the process of loss of control over work (closeness of supervision, routinization and substantive complexity) are significantly related to powerlessness, self-estrangement and normlessness.

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Joseph in his study among urban transport workers reveals that there is a significant relationship between alienation and worker involvement in trade unions. The study found that the higher the alienation of the worker, the higher was his involvement in trade unions.

4.4 MODALITIES OF ALIENATION OF THE WORKING CLASSES

The discussion of the concept of alienation has shown that the phenomenon has been analyzed from various perspectives and from various angles. However, it can be concluded that the

alienation of the working classes is an integral part of the labour process given the politico-economic framework of a given mode of production. The discussion also shows that the alienation of the working classes can be viewed from two perspectives : from the perspective of the relations of production and from the perspective of production relations. Classical Marxian theory would say that the very system of wage labour so much a part of the capitalist mode of production is the basis of worker alienation. The worker is alienated not only from the product of his labour but also from the process of production, from other workers and ultimately from himself. Alienation therefore is the legacy of the working classes under the capitalist mode of production.

Apart from the above basis of alienation, the discussion has also shown that alienation is experienced in the production relations (technical, behavioural, managerial relations) within the framework of the dominant mode of production. The worker experiences alienation in the relations in production. The modalities of alienation which have been identified are: powerlessness, self-estrangement, cultural estrangement, normlessness and meaninglessness. This existential dimension of alienation is a poignant manifestation of the oppressed state of the working classes given the fundamental system of wage labour under the capitalist mode.

While alienation given the relations of production has been given due attention, the reality of alienation given relations in production has not been given due attention especially in

socialist societies and also in societies characterized by Mixed economies. . Similarly while alienation flowing from the wage labour system under the capitalist mode has been discussed in relation to the development of working class consciousness, the relation between the modalities of alienation in the production relations and worker involvement in trade unions has not received due attention. Hence the finding that alienation in production relations is significantly related to worker involvement in trade unions referred to earlier becomes important. The finding that the alienation of the worker impels him to participate in trade unions calls for an analysis of the modalities of trade unionism given the socio-economic formation and concomitant work organizations in a given context. Such an analysis would help in assessing in society whether trade unions are part of the praxis of alienation or the praxis of disalienation of the working classes.

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