Class conflict and class consciousness: coal miners in the Bochum area of the Ruhr 1870-1914

S.H.F. Hickey

St. Antony's College, Oxford

Title: Class conflict and class consciousness: coal miners in the Bochum area of the Ruhr 1870-1914

Name: S.H.F. Hickey

College: St. Antony's College

Degree: D.Phil.

Term: Trinity 1978

The working class in the Ruhr was in the process of formation throughout this period, with considerable migration into the area from many parts of Germany and abroad. Mobility was also high within the Ruhr. The result was that the working class was unsettled and unhomogenous. Divisions were preserved and strengthened by company housing and by the important role of denominational organisations within the social and community life of the district.

The experience of work provided a possible basis for working class unity. Mine work was hard, dangerous and often not particularly well paid. Discontent and conflict was expressed through absenteeism, job-changing and unplanned, spontaneous strikes. The issues were pay, hours and dignity at work. Solidarity, however, was limited so that strikes generally ended in defeat and disarray. The only significant concessions came not from the employers but from the Government.

The labour movement tried to create a stronger basis for class unity through the creation of strong organisations encompassing the mass of workers. This in turn required the avoidance of contentious and divisive issues such as religion, and meant that precedence was given to organisation-building rather than to industrial militancy or political radicalism. This approach, which was typical of the labour movement in Germany, was thus in large measure a response to the problems of working class society in the Ruhr. The labour movement was unsuccessful, however, in its attempt to overcome working class divisions through the emphasis on organisation: only Government intervention in the years after 1914 offered a way forward.
ABSTRACT 2.

Title: Class conflict and class consciousness: coal miners in the Bochum area of the Ruhr 1870-1914

Name: S.H.F. Hickey

College: St. Antony's College.

Degree: D.Phil.

Term: Trinity 1978.

Most writing on the labour movement in Germany has concentrated on ideological and narrowly political history, but has not attempted to study the history of working people themselves. In consequence, even political history has been seen as occurring in a vacuum. This study is concerned with the history of the "working class" itself, using the term not in the sense of E.P. Thompson but rather as a categorization of that section of the population who did manual labour for wages. The ultimate aim is to understand the history of the labour movement, but it is suggested that this cannot be done without detailed reference to the history of working people themselves. The workers studied are the coal miners of the eastern Ruhr, particularly around Bochum.

The starting place for the social history of Germany in the nineteenth century is the population explosion and the flight from the land abroad and to the cities. Population growth and population movement were the prerequisites for the fundamental social transformations of industrialization and urbanization. Nowhere was this more true than the Ruhr: industrial development was fed by large scale migration of workers into the area from all parts of Germany and from abroad throughout the century. Movement also continued on a large scale within the area. The result was that "the working class" was composed in the main of newcomers to the area and to industry; was highly unsettled (hindering the development of "community"); and was in the very process of formation
throughout this period. Workers had little in common, except the experience of work itself. They even spoke different languages and dialects.

Social divisions within the working class were preserved within the new industrial environment in the Ruhr by a number of factors, of which two of the most influential were housing and religion. The rapid growth of population put great strains on the housing supply, particularly since many private builders were reluctant to build speculatively for the working class market. A severe housing crisis in the 1880's was overcome, but the underlying situation remained bad: overcrowding and high rents were still very serious problems in the 1900's. Overcrowding encouraged the spread of disease, and was thus dangerous as well as inconvenient; contemporaries, however, were often more concerned about the moral dangers of overcrowding, and particularly the boarding system by which single workers shared the homes of married colleagues. A growing number of employers tried to solve the housing problem, which affected them as well as workers since it prevented them from securing the workers they needed, by themselves building homes for their employees. The proportion of mine-workers living in company housing rose dramatically.

Company housing tied workers to their employer and reduced their contacts with other workers. Typically, company housing was arranged in physically separate "colonies", in which immigrants from particular places of origin were sometimes put together. In addition to housing (which was usually of good quality and cheap) they were sometimes provided with company stores, cheap food, gardens, medical cover and other benefits.
All this was dependent on continued work for the employer concerned, so that the workers were effectively tied to him. Job-changing, which was generally endemic in the Ruhr, and which was an important means by which individual miners sought improved wages or conditions, was much lower amongst inhabitants of company housing.

The Ruhr was traditionally a place of mixed denominations, and this pattern continued with the large scale immigration of both Catholics and Protestants. Both Churches felt obliged to take positive steps to maintain their appeal and relevance to workers. The Catholics were the first to appeal openly to the concerns of industrial workers, partly because very few employers in the Ruhr were Catholics. Catholic workers' clubs were founded and flourished, usually under the dominance of the local priest. The Church insisted that their chief function was defence of the faith: thus despite their work on behalf of workers, they served to isolate Catholic miners from Protestants and from "atheistic" social democrats. Catholics were also active in miners' trade unions, but again insisted on "Christian" principles which brought them into conflict with social democrats and contributed to the division of the trade union movement into "Christian" and "free" organisations.

The Protestants were much less willing to espouse miners' causes, but fear of the Catholics and social democrats compelled them too to foster Protestant workers. Protestant workers clubs were founded, designed to combat "ultramontanism" and "atheistic" social democracy. Trade unionism was frowned on until after 1905, when "Christian" (but not social democratic) unionism was finally approved.
The denominational organisations provided the framework for much of the social life of the district, and for the definition of a sense of "community". This was particularly true of the Poles (Catholic) and the Masurians (Protestant) whose sense of identity and (in the case of the Poles) of nationhood was inextricably bound up with their religious loyalties and organisations. Religion thus helped considerably to preserve and foster the divisions within the working class.

The factor which did offer the potential to unify the socially and culturally disparate working class in the Ruhr and to provide a "class consciousness" (as against company, denominational or ethnic consciousness) amongst workers was the common experience of work itself. Most miners went through approximately the same career structure, so that divisions of earnings and status normally reflected different ages and different stages in the career cycle, rather than more fundamental and permanent divisions into "skilled", "unskilled" etc. Miners worked in teams, depending on other members both for their safety and for adequate wages.

There were many reasons for discontent. Relations between miners and overmen were generally bad: the latter were thought to use their power (e.g. to discount inadequately filled trucks) arbitrarily. Mine work was physically hard and dangerous: explosions were the most dramatic danger, but falls and other accidents were also very common and the Ruhr was a particularly dangerous mining district within Germany and Europe. More serious than accidents, however, was the risk of industrial disease. Unemployment was not a widespread problem after
the slump of the 1870's, but the hours of work provided inexhaustible
grounds for conflict. The growing size and depth of the mines meant
that the traditional 8-hour day became longer and longer in practice,
since it took longer to get to and from the actual coal face. In
addition, the onset of booms led to considerable pressure on the miners
to work more shifts and to work overtime on top of them.

The average wages paid to miners in the Ruhr were higher than those
paid in other parts of Germany. Nevertheless, for many they were still
dangerously low. The average figures concealed considerable variations,
and an individual miner's wage could fluctuate from one month to the next
depending on the nature of the coal seam. Rising wages during booms
were often in large part the result of longer hours rather than higher
rates. The actual standard of living of a miner and his family
depended very largely on the size of his family: one man's wages were
generally not sufficient to support a wife and several children. And
rising prices eliminated much of the benefit from the long-term upward
trend in wages.

The experience of work in the mines thus provided a number of grounds
for discontent and conflict between miners and employers. This was
expressed in a number of forms. One was simply taking time off. This
was particularly common after week-ends and pay days, and was more wide-
spread during booms than recessions. Nevertheless, miners risked heavy
fines as well as lost wages by staying away from work without permission,
and achieved at best some temporary relief from the rigours of pit work.
Another very important expression of conflict was to seek work elsewhere:
this common practice was in part the result of the sustained demand for
labour in the Ruhr and in part the result of the wage system which (because of the constantly changing character of the coal seams) relied on monthly re-negotiations between miners and overmen about the pay of each team. During these negotiations miners would threaten to leave and find better paid work elsewhere if the offer was not improved.

Absenteeism and job-changing were important expressions of conflict between workers and employers. They were, however, generally individual acts and did not require or imply much unity or cohesion amongst the miners. Strikes, in contrast, were by their nature collective acts and offered no prospect of success unless a high degree of collective - class - consciousness and solidarity could be achieved. Strikes were fairly common in the Ruhr pits, occurring like absenteeism and job-changing mainly during economic booms. Almost all were unplanned and spontaneous, frequently taking place against the wishes of miners' official leaders. The issues were virtually always closely related to the experience of work: higher wages, shorter hours and greater dignity and involvement for the miner at work were the issues raised, in one form or another, in most strikes. They reflected the combination of growing pressure at work, disappointed hopes and reduced fear of unemployment as economic conditions improved. One particular factor which led to many strikes was the fact that the wages of younger mine-workers, paid by the shift rather than on piece-rates, tended to lag behind those of the hewers, leading to particular frustrations amongst these youngsters - who in any case had less to lose through a strike than some of their older colleagues.
On only two occasions did miners' strikes gain the support of an overwhelming majority of mine-workers in the Ruhr. Other strikes generally remained limited to a single mine or group of mines, and sometimes to a particular group of miners within them. Even in 1889 the peak of solidarity lasted only a matter of days, and in 1905 it was increasingly recognized that it could not be sustained for the months which might be necessary to decisively defeat the employers. The strike willingness and the solidarity shown on these two occasions by the Ruhr miners was considerable, but remained insufficient to actually win real victories. On other occasions strikes ended in complete defeat and disarray. What concessions there were (and they were limited) usually came not from the employers but from the Government. From the employers came sackings and reprisals.

"Class conflict" was therefore endemic in the Ruhr, and took a number of forms, of which strikes were particularly significant because of their collective character. But "class consciousness" was insufficient to turn these spontaneous and unplanned stoppages into actual victories over the employers. The challenge to the organised labour movement, therefore, was to provide some basis for common action which could offer a greater chance of success. It is against this background that the emphasis shown by both trade unions and the SPD on the merits of organisation must be seen. They hoped that by creating a disciplined organisation, encompassing all or at least the great majority of workers, a solidarity could be created which would be strong enough to take on the employers on more equal terms. This required, on the part of the trade union, the eschewing of political and religious issues, which would immediately
ensure that large numbers of miners would stay away. In the SPD too, there was little call for radical policies which were considered likely only to alienate potential sympathisers. The heavy emphasis on steady organisational work and the precedence which this took over industrial militancy or political radicalism within the labour movement was thus in large measure an attempt to tackle the social and industrial problems of the area.

The attempt was not, however, successful. The denominational divisions within the working class persisted and rendered all attempts to submerge sectarianism within a common working class organisation nugatory. The Catholics (and some Protestants) insisted on their own miners' union, rivalling the "free" union; the decision of the Poles to form their own union, and the continued existence of the Hirsch-Duncker union meant that there was a four-way division. Even so, perhaps even more weakening was the fact that most mineworkers remained outside the unions entirely. Similarly on the political plane the Centre and National Liberal parties were able (with support from denominational clubs) to maintain a successful appeal to large numbers of Catholic and Protestant workers respectively, thus undermining the SPD's claims to be the specific party of the workers. The twin defeats of 1912, when a miners' strike collapsed within days and the SPD lost two Reichstag seats in the Ruhr, demonstrated clearly the continued weakness of the organised labour movement in the Ruhr. Only the substantial intervention of the Government during the war and revolution provided a way forward for the labour movement from its impasse, but made it in the process dangerously dependent on political developments at the centre.
Writers have generally stressed those features of working class society in the Ruhr which promoted class unity and solidarity, particularly amongst the miners. Here, however, it has been suggested that the working class in the Ruhr was an unsettled and unhomogenous entity, characterized by deep divisions and rarely showing effective solidarity. If this was true of miners, where the conditions for common feeling and the development of solidarity were in many respects particularly favourable, it may well also have been true of other workers in Germany. And if these divisions largely explain the importance of organisational work to the labour movement in the Ruhr, similar factors may lie behind the similar emphasis within the labour movement in Germany generally.
CONTENTS

Introduction ........................................ 1

Chapter 1: The creation of the working class in the Ruhr ........................................ 13

Chapter 2: Housing .................................... 51

Chapter 3: Religion .................................... 103

Chapter 4: Work in the mines ......................... 143

Chapter 5: Miners' strikes ............................ 225

Chapter 6: Organisation: trade unions and politics ........................................ 295

Conclusion ........................................... 370

Bibliography .......................................... 393
## TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coal production in the Ruhr 1800-1913</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Population of Bochum Stadt and Landkreis 1880-1910</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Surplus of births over deaths</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Natural increase and migrant surplus in Bochum 1893-1912</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Migrants as proportion of manual workers, Bochum 1907</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hirings and departures as percentage of all miners employed, Ruhr mines 1896-1913</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dwelling houses built in Bochum 1870-1881</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Overcrowding in urban housing 1905</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Overcrowding by size of dwelling 1905</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>People per room by size of dwelling, Bochum 1871 and 1905</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Homes owned by mines in the Ruhr</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Labour turnover at Bochum mines 1900</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Denominational breakdown, Bochum Altstadt 1900</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Catholics as a proportion of workers by industry, Bochum 1907</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Catholics in town and Landkreis Bochum 1871 and 1912</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Proportion of hewers with various earnings per shift, June 1900-1907</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Proportion of hewers with various earnings per shift, Bruchstrasse, Oct.-Dec. 1907</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Average earnings of Ruhr miners (all categories) 1905-1912</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Membership of Alter Verband in Ruhr 1894-1913</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>&quot;Socialist agitators&quot; in Weitmar, Herne and Harpen 1896-1912</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>SPD members, Reichstagswahlkreis Bochum 1910-1914</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RUHR DISTRICT

BOCHUM
### Abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bergbau Archiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKB</td>
<td>Handelskammer zu Bochum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGBE</td>
<td>Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau und Energie (Archiv)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IISG</td>
<td>Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (Amsterdam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IZF</td>
<td>Institut für Zeitungsforschung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KA</td>
<td>Krupp-Archiv (Bochum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLB</td>
<td>Königliche Landrat Bochum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPA</td>
<td>Regierungspräsident Arnsberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StAB</td>
<td>Stadtarchiv Bochum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAM</td>
<td>Staatsarchiv Münster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWA</td>
<td>Westfälische Wirtschaftsarchiv (Dortmund)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study is concerned with the history of one section of the German working class at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Yet in origins and in conception it probably owes as much or more to recent work on the working class in Britain as to work on Germany itself. It is therefore appropriate to begin with some brief comments on recent British historiography in this field.¹

The single most influential recent study of British social and labour history is without doubt E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class.*² Here we will be concerned with two particular aspects of British historiography which appear in and have been furthered by Thompson's monumental study.

The first is the recognition of the importance of what has been called "history from below".³ Thompson and other recent historians of British labour have successfully shifted attention away from the more traditional concern with the history of trade unions, political parties and labour organisations, towards a prime concern with working people themselves and their experiences at work, at home, in society and in politics.


³ Evans "Wilhelm II and the Historians".
This in turn has led not only to a considerable enrichment of our knowledge of the history of British society, but has meant some re-thinking of basic notions: class conflict has been increasingly recognised to encompass such relatively inconspicuous but nonetheless important and endemic forms such as absenteeism, go-slow, job-changing etc., as well as the more obvious and dramatic forms such as large strikes, riots, and the building of organisations. It is recognised to have occurred in a range of settings, including small workshops and the countryside as well as in advanced factories. The crucial "turning points" have been increasingly defined in economic terms, rather than institutional. And there has been growing awareness of the importance of regional, local and sectional differences within the broad national trends. Despite Eric Hobsbawm's comment that "the history of the working class in industrial Britain has only just begun to be written", the recent literature is now substantial and growing rapidly. It is now generally recognized in the British context that labour history must concern itself not merely with the history of labour leaders and organisations: it must attempt to recover and explain the history of ordinary working class people themselves.

One aim of this study is to apply this perception to the German working

class and the German labour movement. The history of the German working class in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even more than that of the British, has "only just begun to be written". Detailed studies are still rare. Most recent writing has concentrated on narrowly "political" events, particularly the history of the ideology and organisation of the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands - SPD). Relatively little attention has been given to the mass of workers and their specific situations at work and in their communities: the focus has generally remained firmly on activities at the centre of the political stage. Perhaps most surprising is the extent to which this is true even of regional and local studies of the labour movement. The result has been that the political events tend to appear as occurring almost in a vacuum. Ideological and organisational factors appear to dominate the history of the German labour movement. The workers themselves in whose name ideologists, propagandists, organisers and leaders of all political shades claimed to speak and act and on whom they ultimately depended for their support, hardly appear.


2. The literature on this is enormous. Perhaps the main studies are C.E. Schorske German Social Democracy, 1905-1917 (Harvard, 1955); G.A. Ritter Die Arbeiterbewegung im Wilhelminischen Reich (Berlin, 1959); D. Groh Negative Integration und Revolutionarer Attentismus (Frankfurt a.M., 1974); J.P. Nettl "The German Social Democratic Party 1890-1914 as a Political Model in Past and Present No. 35, (1965).

3. Instances would include K.E. Koring Die sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen (Hannover, 1968); R. Litzenkirchen Der sozialdemokratische Verein für den Reichstagswahlkreis Dortmund-Ürde (Dortmund, 1970); J. Reulecke (ed) Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr (Juppertal, 1974).
Yet all ultimately depended on them, and without an understanding of the social, economic and industrial realities experienced by and in part created by the working class it is impossible to adequately understand why the history of the labour movement took the form that it did.

This study therefore represents an attempt to write "history from below". The ultimate focus remains the history of the labour movement - or, perhaps more accurately, labour movements. But the bulk of the study is devoted to the examination of the social, cultural and industrial factors which shaped the character and experience of the working class. These factors imposed the main parameters within which the labour movement could exist, and the main problems which it faced. It is they which ultimately explain why its history took the form it did.

A second notable way in which Thompson's writing on the English working class has influenced subsequent historians has been through his use of the very term "class". Thompson suggests that class should not be seen primarily as a sociological and ultimately static instrument of categorization, but rather as process:

"By class I understand a historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness. I emphasize that it is a historical phenomenon. I do not see class as a 'structure', nor even as a 'category', but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships .... And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs".

A "working class", according to this perception, can be said to exist not when the number of people doing some form of manual wage labour (however defined) reaches a certain level, but when class conflict and class consciousness appear. Thus Hobsbawm suggests:

"For the purposes of the historian .... class and the problem of class consciousness are inseparable. Class in the full sense only comes into existence when classes begin to acquire consciousness of themselves as such".  

Foster, in his study of Oldham, also sees "class" primarily in terms of class conflict and class consciousness:

"And looking at Oldham itself there does seem to exist .... the necessary conditions for class formation: a vanguard group leading mass struggle and able to use that position to argue for a wider struggle against the system itself".  

This emphasis on conflict itself as a crystallizing element in the development of class self-awareness has proved a useful stimulus to historians concerned to recover previously forgotten or ignored instances of protest at and opposition to various aspects of industrializing society. It has helped to establish the persistent existence of class conflict - expressed in many different forms - even at times and in places where its presence had not previously been noted. Nevertheless, the approach does have serious drawbacks. Is it sufficient to use the existence of class conflict and class consciousness as the yardsticks for


2. Foster Class Struggle p.123. In his foreword to the same book, Hobsbawm comments that "the existence of the working class is inseparable from its struggles". See also A. Howkins "Edwardian Liberalism and Industrial Unrest" in History Workshop Journal (Vol.4, Autumn 1977) p.150.
the existence of class itself? In the case of Thompson this results in the paradoxical position that the working class was "made" in its (for him) most significant respects by the 1830's - i.e. at a time when industrialization was still in its infancy in England. Similarly, it leads Foster to focus on radical and class-conscious Oldham and to attribute to it a significance denied to the two towns with which he compares it, South Shields and Northampton, which although less radical were also populated predominantly by workers.

The recovery of the history of working class radicalism and class conflict (however defined and expressed) is an important historical task. There is, however, a separate and at least equally important historical problem: what was the response of working people generally to the industrial revolution and to its many consequences? This involves using terms such as "working people" or "working class" not in terms of their ideology or self-consciousness, nor even necessarily in terms of their conflicts with other sections of society, but as in some sense a socio-economic section of the population. It involves focusing on those workers who did not show much sign of protest or militancy as well as those who did; and on those periods when class conflict was relatively dormant as well as on the times when it was strong. It involves stressing, for example, that South Shields and Northampton were just as much "working class" towns as Oldham, and that the responses of their inhabitants to

1. This alternative use of the term "class" is described by E. Hobsbawn as standing for "those broad aggregates of people which can be classified together by an objective criterion - because they stand in a similar relationship to the means of production - and more especially the groupings of exploiters and exploited." Hobsbawn "Class consciousness and history" p.5; see also E.J. Hobsbawn "From social history to the history of society" in Flinn and Smout (ed) Essays in Social History p. 15.
the experience of economic and social change were just as significant of working class attitudes as those of the Oldham radicals. Indeed, one might suspect that there were several Shields for every Oldham; and that while the Oldhams may, as Foster suggests, have been of particular importance in frightening the bourgeoisie, it was in part at least their very isolation and a-typicality which ultimately allowed the comprehensive defeat of working class radicalism.

A weakness of the approach to class used by Thompson and others is thus that it tends to focus attention on instances of class conflict, and insufficiently on those elements within as well as outside the working class which modified either its incidence or its implications in terms of ultimate social change. To assess the historical importance of the radical tradition it is necessary to place it within the wider context of working class life and experience in all its diversity. The same need is just as pressing in the case of Germany. Here too historians have tended to concern themselves with the radical stream within the labour movement, to the exclusion of other aspects of working class history. While many books have been written on, for instance, the SPD, the Catholic working class movement and the many workers who remained loyal to explicitly conservative political parties have received little attention. Even within the history of the socialist labour movement the generally less radical trade unions, despite their numerical preponderance and their pre-eminent importance in the context of the work place, have received only a fraction of the attention devoted the SPD. And within the history of the SPD itself, historians have commonly shown far greater interest in the personalities and policies of the left than of the party's mainstream: we know far more, for instance, about
the arguably marginal Rosa Luxemburg than about such pre-eminent figures as August Bebel and Friedrich Ebert.¹

By the early twentieth century the characteristic political expression of both the British and the German working class was one form or another of "reformism" (although the SPD maintained its revolutionary rhetoric), marked by the primacy of well organized, non-revolutionary trade unions and a relatively cautious Parliamentary party. Industrial militancy remained common, but was only rarely accompanied by a very marked or strong political radicalism. A central aim of this study will be to explore the social and industrial factors behind this "reformist" tradition in Germany. Too frequently it has been presented simply as the product of relatively superficial factors - the self-seeking ambitions of leaders and/or of bureaucracy; the vagaries of the party's constitution; the unexplained and apparently arbitrary interference of trade union leaders; or the influence of an undefined "labour aristocracy".² It will be suggested that the reformist tradition in at least one area emerged largely out of bitter experience of the realities of social life and industrial conflict, and was an attempt - although only partially successful in practice - to face and overcome these problems.

¹ Rosa Luxemburg is chiefly known through the biographies of Nettl and Frölich: J.P. Nettl Rosa Luxemburg (Oxford, 1966); P. Frölich Rosa Luxemburg (London, 1940). No comparable biographies of Bebel or Ebert are available.

² These issues are discussed in virtually all the studies of the German labour movement cited. See also G. Fulberth "Zur Genese des Revisionismus in der deutschen Sozialdemokratie vor 1914" in Das Argument (März 1971); D. Fricke Zur Organisation und Tätigkeit der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1890-1914 (Leipzig, 1962) pp. 7-15; particularly influential has been R. Michels Political Parties (New York, 1959 edition).
The strength of the reformist tradition within the German labour movement should not be taken as implying that conflict between workers and employers was not a characteristic of industrial life during the period under review. Conflict was perennial and expressed itself in various ways, including job-changing, absenteeism, and strikes. But this running conflict was relatively rarely transformed into fundamental political critique of capitalist society, and those who sought to make such connections found only minority support amongst the workers. There was thus a tension between strong and persistent "class conflict" and relatively limited and weak political consciousness and mobilization along class lines - "class consciousness". It was out of this and similarly ambiguous features of the industrial and social experience of the working class - for example, about the role of the state - that the ambiguities of the labour movement grew.

The present study of necessity focuses on one particular section of the German working class. The selection is both by area (the Ruhr, and particularly the area around Bochum) and by occupation (coal miners). These limits are imposed mainly for practical reasons of time and space, but also because some other aspects are well covered elsewhere and because the prime need now is for relatively intensive and detailed studies of particular groups: until this has been done in a number of instances it will not be possible to construct satisfactory general accounts of the working class in Germany.¹

The area studied is mainly Bochum and the surrounding Reichstagswahlkreis (which included Gelsenkirchen, Herne, Witten and Hattingen), but information from elsewhere in the Ruhr will be drawn on as and when possible and appropriate. Bochum has a number of particular claims to attention: it was not dominated by just one giant company, as was Essen; it combined both long-established and new enterprises, unlike Hamborn; it had a balanced denominational structure, unlike either the predominantly Catholic western Ruhr or the predominantly Protestant Dortmund and the east. Politically, Bochum was fairly equally divided between National Liberalism, political Catholicism (including Polish nationalism) and Social Democracy - the latter dominated by the mainstream reformist tradition.

Miners are commonly regarded as a particularly united and cohesive group in society. Hobsbawm, for instance, observes that: "The habit of solidarity, which is the foundation of effective trade unionism, takes time to learn - even where, as in coal-mines, it suggests itself naturally". One recent study of Bochum and the Ruhr contrasts the "occupational community" which is said to have characterized the miners, with the general lack of social and occupational cohesiveness amongst metal workers. Similarly Tenfelde, in the most recent and most substantial study of miners in the Ruhr, sees "class formation" as the main characteristic of the nineteenth century period:

1. Hobsbawm *Labouring Men* p.9
"The rebuilding of social organisation on the basis of a capitalist economy brought a fundamentally new proportionality of social groups and institutions .... In contrast to the /"former/ unity and balance of the old corpus of estates in mining, to /"the miners'/ joint identity as workers and subjects and to their attachment to the spiritually legitimized ruling powers, the new proportions of the industrial society destroyed the hierarchical communications structure in favour of mobility and freedom of movement; and introduced in place of the structured world of estates (Stände) the division of the mining community and the process of antagonistic social differentiation. For the workers in particular this development included numerous unifying tendencies, which formed the precondition for the experience of a common fate and the translation of common interest into active struggle and into representational bodies". 1

The most important of these "unifying tendencies", suggests Tenfelde, was the "general experience of industrial and social dominance and repression", while others included relative material deprivation and a loss of status. 2

A fundamental question to which this study will address itself, is just how strong were these unifying factors? How much solidarity was actually shown by the miners? There is no doubt that Crew is correct to argue that miners showed appreciably greater social cohesion and solidarity than metal workers in the Ruhr: but this does not necessarily mean that they showed much. Similarly, it will be suggested that Tenfelde stresses the unifying aspects of the miners' experience at the expense of the deep and continuing divisive elements. The point is not merely to shift the emphasis so as to create a more rounded picture of the miners' society and experience: it will be suggested that the continuance of strong divisions within the working class was the decisive factor in shaping the direction of the labour movement; that the heavy

2. ibid. p. 339.
stress on organisational growth and on the need for a cautious approach to industrial conflict, which was characteristic of the miners' leaders and representatives, was largely the product of the lack of unity and effective solidarity shown by the miners throughout this period. If this was true even of miners, amongst whom the conditions for unity and solidarity were in many respects particularly favourable, it seems reasonable to suggest that similar factors may also have been influential among other sections of the German working class.

Four main groups of sources were used for this study: a number of very informative contemporary accounts of miners' life and history; local and regional Government archives, containing a wealth of reports, press cuttings etc.; certain private archives - of the Dortmund Handelskammer (containing those of the former Bochum Handelskammer), of Krupp in Bochum (containing those of the former Bochumer Verein für Gussstahlfabrikation), of the Bergbau Museum, and of IG Bergbau und Energie; and finally a range of press sources.

1. Among the most notable of these contemporary accounts are L. Pieper Die Lage der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1903); L. Fischer-Eckert Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Frauen in dem modernen Industrieort Hanborn im Rheinland (Hagen, 1913); O. Hue Die Bergarbeiter (2 vols. Stuttgart, 1910 and 1913); H. Imbusch Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisation im deutschen Bergbau (Essen, 1908).
CHAPTER 1:  THE CREATION OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE RUHR

The starting point for any analysis of the social transformation of Germany in the nineteenth century must be the growth of the population. The growing size of the population was the indispensible precondition for the economic and social developments which transformed much of Germany in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and dictated many of the characteristics of the changes and problems which arose. In 1820 the lands which later comprised the 1871 German Empire had some 25 million inhabitants. By the mid-century the figure stood at 3½ million and in 1871 nearly 4½ million. By 1890 the population had reached almost 50 million, and by 1910 almost 65 million. This increase - 160 per cent in ninety years - was proportionately slightly less than that of Great Britain over the same period (190 per cent), but far higher than that of Italy (83 per cent) or France (30 per cent).¹

Such a growth in the number of people living in the same area naturally created severe problems for agriculture, their chief means of support. The problem took two forms. The most immediate was the simple one of producing sufficient food for the larger numbers. This did not prove too difficult, at least in the long run. The output of grain crops in Germany grew from 123 million quintals per year on average in 1845-54 to 458 million in 1905-14; the total value of agricultural output, expressed in constant (1913) prices, rose from about 1.2 billion marks to 11.2 billion over the same period.² In addition there was the

2. ibid. pp.19, 33.
possibility of importing food from more efficient or larger scale producers such as America and Russia, providing, of course, that sufficient foreign currency could be earned in other ways to pay for it. The second aspect of the problem - accentuated by the increased productivity itself - was that agriculture was no longer able to provide virtually the whole population with a livelihood.

The failure of agriculture to provide the growing population with sufficient employment was clearly felt first in south-western Germany, in Baden, Württemberg and the Palatinate. Here partible inheritance played an important part in reducing peasants' holdings to very small sizes, with the result that as the population grew increasing numbers farmed dangerously near the subsistence level. At times of bad harvest, as in the disastrous years of 1816 and 1817, there was serious and widespread distress. Large numbers of peasants were forced to leave the land and seek their fortunes elsewhere. In the Lippe-Detmold area it has been estimated that the number of individual farmers increased from 5,700 to 7,600 in the period 1781 to 1818, while the number of landless lodgers rose from 3,500 to 8,000. Clearly a growing number of these people were becoming economically marginal and were very vulnerable to any agricultural crisis.

For many the situation was worsened by the terms of the emancipation

of the peasantry which took place in parts of Germany in the early
nineteenth century. Fiscal taxes or compensation frequently had to be
paid. In areas where partible inheritance was not the rule money had
to be raised to provide an inheritance for younger sons. This meant
borrowing and the piling up of debts, and encouraged peasants to sell
out.

In Mecklenburg and Prussia east of the Elbe the rural scene was
dominated not by small peasant farmers but by large estates. Here the
problem of overpopulation manifested itself differently. In Mecklenburg
the obligation on the local community to provide for the poor relief of
its inhabitants, combined with the political control which the big
estate-owners exercised over their localities, meant that it was made
extremely difficult for young men to settle and raise a family.
Marriage was dependent on the production of certificate of domicile, and
this could only be provided by the lord. He in turn did his best to keep
down his possible future costs in poor relief by ensuring that only those
with a clear right to live there or who were absolutely essential for the
estate received such a certificate. The pressure was therefore on for
"surplus" people to leave the area.\(^1\) In eastern Prussia peasant
emancipation was accompanied by an expansion of agricultural production
which ensured continued employment for the first decades of the century.
It was only in the 1860's that the capacity of agriculture to absorb
labour in this area reached an end. In 1868 the Ministry of Commerce
was actively seeking job opportunities to relieve distress. The 1870's
saw the appearance of cheap foreign grain in bulk, and precipitated
rationalization and a large-scale exodus from the land.\(^2\)

1. Marschalck Deutsche Ueberseezanderung p.64
2. \textit{ibid.} pp.65-6: Tenfelde \textit{Sozialgeschichte} p.239
Agriculture was not the only traditional livelihood which suffered in the nineteenth century. Traditional cottage industries like spinning and weaving were hit by the appearance of competition from mechanized sources, at first from England but later from within Germany itself. Cottage industry was of importance to many agricultural workers and small-holders who used it to supplement their family's income. The collapse of one source of income could force them to leave the land entirely. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether industry had ever provided a major source of support for more than a small proportion of the population, and its difficulties were not therefore as significant as those of agriculture.

The nineteenth century thus saw a very considerable expansion of the population in Germany, and a failure of the traditional means of support - primarily agriculture - to provide employment for them. As a result millions of people left the land and their homes and moved in search of work. Many left Germany entirely. In 1817 the Austrian ambassador in Karlsruhe reported:

"The Grand-Ducal Ministry has hitherto done everything possible to encourage emigration from this country. This would seem to be due to over-population and it may be hoped that the removal of so many families will lead to better conditions .... The Grand-Ducal authorities soon had their hands full with satisfying the desire to emigrate".

1. Ferenczi "International Migration Statistics" p.117
2. ibid. p.115.
In 1818 an official in Arnsberg reported:

"In Hesse-Darmstadt the same wandering spirit is said to have erupted. It is true that invitations from earlier emigrants have arrived in these parts with fair promises of better conditions in America; the local authorities, however, see the main cause of emigration not in these attractions but in poverty and the recent severe difficulties in gaining a livelihood". 1

There was substantial emigration from Germany throughout the century. After rising sharply after the end of the Napoleonic Wars the rate declined in the 1820's, but then rose again. Bad harvests and depression led to large-scale emigration in the 1830's, 40's and 50's. Agricultural depression likewise precipitated the peak emigration of the years 1880-95. After this it fell, and there may have been some net immigration into Germany in the remaining years before 1914. Over the period 1840 to 1910 it has been estimated that Germany lost about five million emigrants, net of immigrants. 2 The loss caused particular concern since the emigrants came from the rural population who were often thought to represent the strength and core of the nation. Bismarck denounced the emigrant, "who discards his country like an old coat; for me he is no longer a German". 3

Not all migrants, however, went abroad. Even larger numbers moved to new homes within Germany, to industry and the towns. The latter expanded enormously. In 1850 only four urban areas - Berlin, Hamburg,


Breslau and Dresden - had over 100,000 inhabitants; in 1871 there were eight such centres, and by 1910 the number had risen to 18. Not all the migrants succeeded in finding jobs, particularly in the 1870's and 1880's when the depression was at its height, but industry was eventually able to absorb most of them and from the 1890's Germany ceased to be a net provider of emigrants: "Through the rise of manufactures...it was possible to retain in the country those surplus workers from the rural districts who had furnished most of the emigrants". This contrasted with what was happening in some other parts of Europe: "In contrast to Ireland...a demographic catastrophe (in Germany) was avoided by industrialization".

Migration was thus precipitated largely by economic necessity. Unable to make a living in agriculture, people turned to industry and the towns in search of better opportunities. In 1871 23.7 per cent of the population lived in towns of 5,000 or more; by 1910 48.8 per cent did so, despite the massive increase in the total size of the population in the meantime. Broadly speaking, industry was faced not by a shortage of labour but by large numbers of people looking for employment. Basing himself on the emigration figures, labour exchange statistics and literary

2. Burgdörfer "Migration" p.344.
sources, Desai concludes that, "We have evidence that throughout the period we are considering /1871-1913/, labour for industry was abundant in Germany .... While particular industries (for instance, sugar and brick-making) suffered shortages of labour and particular skills were often scarce, this was due to local circumstances and not to a general labour shortage".1

This vast upheaval must be the starting point for any analysis of the social history of nineteenth century Germany. Inevitably the conditions under which industrialization took place deeply effected the character of its development. To simplify broadly, we would not expect the material standards offered to a new labour force to be particularly high when the underlying labour market was characterised by a significant and continuing labour surplus and at a time when industrialists were seeking to establish themselves for the first time in the face of strong external competition. Indeed the availability of cheap labour was probably a prerequisite for industrial investment in the early stages of industrialization, when risks were considerable and profits far from assured. On the other hand, with a tight labour market and substantial existing investment in industry we would expect wages and other incentives for labour to rise. Germany was characterised more by the first than the second condition for most of the century, although towards the end the situation, as we have seen, changed, at least as far as the underlying labour market was concerned.

1. A.V. Desai Real Wages in Germany (Oxford, 1968) p.13. Serious complaints were heard from the 1890's of a labour shortage in the Upper Silesian coal industry; nevertheless, the industry took on more than twice as many miners between 1900 and 1914 as in earlier decades. L. Schofer The Formation of a Modern Labour Force, Upper Silesia 1865-1914 (Berkeley, 1975) p.16.
Beyond these economic effects, the migrations created a new social
environment and unprecedented problems in all areas of people's lives.
The failure of agriculture adequately to support the population and the
resultant movements of people from the land resulted in an erosion of
the authority of the traditional social elites associated with it:
the aristocracy, the churches and the traditional state structures.
Old loyalties and methods of social control ceased to be adequate for
the new situation of large masses of people gathered together in towns
and working in industry. New social forces appeared to fill the vacuum -
employers, trade unions, political parties and pressure groups; and with
them updated manifestations of the older elites - church organisations
and political groups which, while continuing to look back to the past and
to give their allegiance to traditional ideologies, adapted to the new
conditions in their methods, and in so doing helped to further many of
the very developments which they sought to obstruct and reverse.¹

The Ruhr was one important district where the problems associated with
the industrialization process manifested themselves in the later nine­
teenth century. There had been coal mining in the area for many years,
mainly in the south near the river Ruhr where the coal lay at or near
the surface. Nevertheless, until the mid-nineteenth century Bochum
and the surrounding area was "primarily a farming district", and
exhibited "a quite rural character".² The development of the mining

¹ Examples might include Bismarck's use of universal suffrage and the
attempts of right wing parties and pressure groups to court mass
support in the Wilhelmine period; the whole tendency culminated in
the Nazi attempt to abolish modern society, using modern society's
weapons. Cf. T.W. I'anson "The Primacy of Politics" in S.J. Woolf (ed)

² StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1857; A. Heinrichsauer Industrielle Siedlung
im Ruhrgebiet (Essen, 1936) p.7.
industry changed this and was the main influence on economic development in the area. Mining was traditionally closely controlled on a day-to-day basis by the Prussian state, until the post-1848 economic liberalisation led it to relax its grip. The Allgemeine Berggesetz of 1865 marked the end of close state involvement in the detailed running of the industry. Henceforth, although the state kept some general supervisory functions, effective control was almost entirely in the hands of the private owners. This "freeing" of the industry was one important spur to expansion. Another important factor was the advance of mining technology. The richer coal seams in the Ruhr lie to the north of the river Ruhr itself, indeed, in the Emscher rather than Ruhr basin, but the further north they lie, the deeper they are. This made them virtually inaccessible until satisfactory solutions could be found to drainage and ventilation problems. It was only in the mid-century that deep level mining became possible in the Ruhr. One of the first deep pits in the western Ruhr was Präsident, just outside Bochum, which opened in 1851. The 1850's and 1860's saw the opening of numerous new pits around Bochum, utilizing the new technology: Baaker Mulde was sunk in 1855-60, Dahlhauser Tiefbau in 1858, Dannenbaum in 1859-61, and Hasenwinkel in 1860-62.

1. H.G. Kirchhoff Die Staatliche Sozialpolitik im Ruhrbergbau (Köln, 1957) chapter 1; Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte chapters I and VII.
3. On the site of present Opel car plant in Bochum.
Despite important cyclical fluctuations the demand for coal maintained a rapid growth through the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Production expanded accordingly:

Table 1. Coal production in the Ruhr (Oberbergamtsbezirk Dortmund) 1800-1913.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of mines</th>
<th>Output (000 tons)</th>
<th>Value of Output (000 marks current)</th>
<th>No. of miners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>1,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>1,666</td>
<td>10,385</td>
<td>12,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>4,366</td>
<td>28,055</td>
<td>29,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>11,813</td>
<td>67,626</td>
<td>51,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>22,459</td>
<td>102,954</td>
<td>80,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>35,669</td>
<td>282,912</td>
<td>127,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>59,619</td>
<td>508,798</td>
<td>226,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>86,866</td>
<td>849,204</td>
<td>345,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>110,812</td>
<td>1,282,013</td>
<td>394,569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enormous scale of the Ruhr mining industry expansion is apparent from these figures. The only index which did not maintain its growth and which actually declined was that of the number of mines. This was the result of the increasing size of pits and the increasing concentration of production in the hands of a relatively small number of companies who rationalized production, closed the smaller and less economic pits and concentrated production on the large ones.

Although the coal industry was the largest, it was not the only growth industry in the area. The high cost of transporting coal encouraged coal consuming industries to base themselves nearby. The chief customer was the iron and steel industry, and several large plants developed in the second half of the century. In Bochum the major iron and steel firm was the Bochumer Verein, founded in 1845 by Jacob Meyer and Eduard Kühne with around fifty workers. Meyer continued to provide the technical direction until his death in 1875. The chief architect of the firm's expansion, however, was Louis Baare, a former director of the Köln-Minden Railway, who joined the firm in 1854 and ran it until 1895, when he was succeeded as general director by his son Fritz. Like other large companies in the Ruhr, the Bochumer Verein sought to control as many aspects of its operations as possible, mining the coal, making the iron and steel, and shaping some of the products itself. The company specialized in railway equipment, and such heavy items as cylinders for hydraulic machines, heavy ships' screws, and bells. Unlike Krupp at Essen, the firm was not noted for its military production. One Cologne newspaper commented on Krupp and the Bochumer Verein: "Both firms may look each other in the eye confidently and without envy, and as Goethe observed with reference to Schiller, the older Essen may say of the younger Bochum: "The Germans should consider themselves fortunate to have two such fellows as us'." 300 men were employed by the Bochumer Verein in 1855, 2,106 in 1870, 5,641 in 1910 and 7,563 in 1913.  


2. K. Brinkmann Bochum (Bochum, 1968) pp.181-184; Döbritz Bochumer Verein table 8. These figures refer only to those working in the metal works, not those in the firm's mines.
The *Bochumer Verein* was the largest company in Bochum, but there were numerous smaller ones in the town and surrounding area. Most were involved in engineering or producing goods for the mines, and employed anything from a dozen to two or three thousand workers in 1913. In 1899 the Bochum Chamber of Commerce could comment that the iron and coal industries "in this district are completely dominant in their economic significance. They also dominate the activity of the other branches of industry and commerce and the great mass of the population is directly or indirectly dependant on their prosperity". Nevertheless, despite the growth of the metal and engineering industries, the mines continued to be the largest employers of labour. In 1900 there were estimated to be 123,000 workers in the Bochum area, and of these 81,500 or 69 per cent were miners; in 1909 the proportion had risen to 72 per cent.

The growth of industry transformed the physical appearance of the area. "Anyone who knew Bochum, its situation and setting twenty, thirty, forty or fifty years ago and was to visit her today and look around after a long absence would hardly know her again", wrote the town's mayor in the 1880's, well before the economic development and the associated changes were anything like completed. In 1903 another observer described the

1. StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1913.
2. StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1898/9 p.17.
3. StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1909 p.31. The area covered is that of the Bochum Chamber of Commerce, including Bochum, Gelsenkirchen, Witten, Herne and Hattingen.
new industrial landscape:

"Virtually the entire Ruhr mining district between Oberhausen and Dortmund, Duisburg, Hattingen and Recklinghausen, already has the appearance of a continuous giant city, its individual parts linked by a thick network of electric trams, state railways and spurs to individual mines, vibrating above and below ground with the most vigorous industrial and mining activity, and teeming with a giant army of workers. It is the main artery and workshop of the German coal and iron industry. Everything lives from and for these two products and everything is touched by them. Wherever one looks there are winding towers and the broad outlines of waste-tips, chimneys and smoking furnaces. The whole scene is enveloped and covered by a misty, gasy, dusty, dirty veil which often scarcely allows the blue sky to be seen and which falls on the rows of houses, churches etc., as a coating of dirt". 1

Small semi-rural towns became industrial cities, and rural hamlets became centres of mining or industry. Even where industry did not settle in the immediate neighbourhood the side effects were still felt.

The pastor of Harpen, a village just east of Bochum, described the transformation of his village:

"When the Harpen Gesellschaft started with the workings, people in the parish of Harpen dreamt of a golden economic future and a great development of the village. Unfortunately this did not occur. Even in the vicarage one could hear the miners below in the earth firing the coal free. But apart from the old Karoline shaft, no great mining establishment ensued. Instead, as by a frost in a spring night, the aspirations of the parish were dashed. The lovely water meadows in the Wiesermühlenbach became boggy, the growth of the trees suffered, nature receded, the potatoes no longer thrived, the songbirds became fewer and the vermin more numerous. A lovely and entirely rural parish with pure air became a country industrial parish. But the worst was that throughout Harpen, the wells, springs and ponds dried up. A court action for compensation, brought by the church, was lost. Harpen had the disadvantages but not the advantages of industry ....". 2

1. I. Pieper Die Lage der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1903) p.21f.

2. Pfarrer Leich Harpen und Harpener Bergbau (Bochum, 1937) p.11.
The general population increase and "surplus" in Germany thus coincided with the industrialisation of the Ruhr and a great increase in demand for labour in that area. Some of the demand was met, particularly in the early years of industrialisation, by seasonal migrations in search of work. In the 1850's many factory workers apparently only worked during the summer months and then returned home for the winter.¹ The building trade remained largely seasonal in character, due mostly to the difficulties of construction work during the winter months: in the winter of 1901 union activity amongst building workers was reported to be spreading from Bochum to Hesse, Eichfeld and the Paderborn area "because the building workers here mostly have their homes in those parts".² Nevertheless, such seasonal migration played only a small part in the overall increase of the work force in the Ruhr. Much more important was the general increase of the population of the area, partly through natural growth but more crucially through permanent or semi-permanent migration to the area.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the population of the Rheinland and Westphalia hardly increased faster than that of Germany as a whole; but between 1880 and 1910 their populations rose by 75 and 102 per cent respectively, whilst that of Germany rose by only 61 per cent.³

1. Döbritz Bochumer Verein p.86.
2. STAM, RA I 96, Stadt Bochum to RPA 10.10.1901.
In the industrial areas themselves the expansion was even more dramatic. The population of Bochum and the surrounding Landkreis rose from under 19,000 in 1855 to nearly 82,000 in 1880 and 256,000 in 1910 - an increase of 335 per cent in 1855-80 and 214 per cent in 1880-1910. Despite the lower rate of increase after 1880 the bulk of the total expansion occurred in the later period. If we break the figures down further, we find that most of the increase came not in the Bochum old town (Altstadt) but in the surrounding suburbs and villages. Between 1880 and 1910 the Altstadt grew by 129 per cent, while the four suburbs which were incorporated into the town in 1904 grew by 343 per cent and the surrounding Landkreis by 216 per cent.

Table 2. Population of Bochum Stadt and Landkreis 1880-1910.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altstadt</td>
<td>33,440</td>
<td>76,150</td>
<td>129 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904 suburbs</td>
<td>13,678</td>
<td>60,326</td>
<td>343 &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining Landkreis</td>
<td>34,468</td>
<td>118,963</td>
<td>216 &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81,526</td>
<td>255,879</td>
<td>214 &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that the expansion of the town was not at the expense of the immediately surrounding countryside. In 1880 some 41 per cent of the total population lived in the Altstadt, but by 1910 the proportion had dropped to 25 per cent. Even taking the post-1904 town boundaries, the proportion living in the town dropped from 58 per cent in 1880 to 54 per cent in 1910.

1. Population figures from: StAB, Magistrats-Berichte; WfA, K2 359; Statistisches Jahrbuch für den Preussischen Staat (Berlin, 1898) Bd. 3; Croon "Studien" p. 95. The area of the Landkreis changed considerably during this period. To compare like with like Gemeinden which no longer figure in 1910 have been excluded throughout. The four Gemeinden incorporated into the town in 1904 were Hamme, Hofstede, Grumme and Niemelhausen.
cent thirty years later. The population was thus becoming less concentrated on the town of Bochum and more on the surrounding villages. This was a reflection of the importance of the mines in providing jobs: only one pit - Präsident - was situated in close proximity to the town itself.

Some of the population growth came from indigenous causes. The annual birth rate in Bochum reached over 60 per thousand in the mid-1870's, and although it fell to under 50 per thousand by 1882, it was not until 1911 that it fell below 40 per thousand. The death rate was considerably lower: between 1875 and 1886 it fluctuated between 35 and 28 per thousand; between 1887 and 1903 it was between 29 and 21 per thousand; between 1905 and 1912 the figure lay between 20 and 15 per thousand. There was therefore a constant excess of births over deaths. The surplus in Bochum and other neighbouring Ruhr towns was greater proportionally than that of Germany as a whole:

Table 3. Surplus of births over deaths, per thousand inhabitants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Bochum</th>
<th>Essen</th>
<th>Dortmund</th>
<th>Hagen</th>
<th>Gelsenkirchen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1865-67</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868-71</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872-75</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876-80</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-85</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-90</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-95</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-1900</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-05</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. StAB, Magistrats-Berichte.
These births and deaths do not, however, tell anything like the full story of the population increase in the Ruhr. We have already noted that vast numbers of people in nineteenth century Germany were moving in search of new opportunities, either elsewhere in the country or abroad. Internally, the Ruhr was one of the main areas to which they moved. Some came from nearby and some from far afield. In Bochum in the 1890's and 1900's the new arrivals numbered in the region of 250 per thousand population each year. The size of the net increase depended not only on the numbers arriving but also on the numbers departing - many of the latter themselves recent immigrants. Table 4 compares the annual surplus of live births over deaths with the surplus of arrivals over departures in Bochum in these years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Natural increase</th>
<th>Migrant balance</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Natural increase</th>
<th>Migrant balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even a comparison such as this does not fully illustrate the impact of migration. The fact that migrants tended to be younger people of

1. Statistisches Jahrbuch deutscher Städte (Breslau)
childbearing age itself played a role in increasing the birth rate. Had Bochum's population of 1880 grown at the national rate, the increase by 1910 would have been about 36,000 rather than the actual 174,000. This rather crude comparison indicates the scale of the contribution of immigration to population growth, since it takes into account the migrants' children born in the new home. Migrants formed an actual majority of the population in this period. Even in 1871 only five out of 22 Bochum Gemeinden had more natives than immigrants, and only one third of the inhabitants of the town itself were born there.\(^1\) In 1907 over 63 per cent of Bochum's population were immigrants - a higher proportion than in some other Ruhr cities: in Gelsenkirchen the figure was 61 per cent, in Dortmund 58 per cent. In the western Ruhr the proportion dropped to 53 in Essen and 51 per cent in Duisburg. The proportion of immigrants was even higher in the surrounding Landkreise than in the cities themselves. As Kollmann comments: "The decisive element in the formation of the population of the large cities was immigration".\(^2\)

A great many of these immigrants came to escape the bad conditions in their homelands. This "negative" motivation may have been of

---


particular importance for those who came from far away parts of Germany such as East and West Prussia and Posen. One observer commented:

"The cause of their mass migration to the west is to be found in the bad economic and social position in which they find themselves at home. The critical relations east of the Elbe make it explicable that the Poles find earnings in the west extremely high and enticing, and that they move in large numbers there". 1

But despite such motivation, the expansion of the mines and industry in the Ruhr was so rapid that the demand for labour could not always be met. Employers therefore sometimes resorted to recruiting campaigns for yet more labour. Early attempts to attract workers in Upper Silesia to the Ruhr were made in the boom years of the early 1870's and the practice became common from the late 1880's. 2 In 1896 advertisements were placed in the Zwickauer Wochenblatt promising wages of up to six marks per shift at the General Blumenthal pit near Recklinghausen, when in reality the average wage for hewers was only M3.80. The mine denied, however, that the advertisement had been placed with their agreement or that it produced many applicants for jobs. 3 Others emphasized not just the wages which could be earned in the west but also the housing and other facilities offered by the potential employer. 4 Such recruiting campaigns sometimes led to discontent and even violence when the immigrants found the reality of the Ruhr less attractive than they had been led to expect. 5

1. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.16.
2. Schofer Formation of a modern labor force pp.73-77.
3. STAM, Oberbergamt Dortmund 14h00.
4. See chapter 2 below.
5. STAM, Oberbergamt Dortmund 18h00, Arbeiter Zeitung 15.1.1910.
The overall immigration figures understate the importance of migration for the working class, since the proportion of migrants was higher amongst workers than amongst the population at large. In 1907 some 63 per cent of Bochum's population were immigrants and 21 per cent had come long distances (i.e. from beyond the Rhineland and Westphalia). Amongst the workers in almost all the chief occupational groups the proportions were far higher:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workers in occupational group</th>
<th>Immigrants (%)</th>
<th>Long distance immigrants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stone and earth</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metals</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for total population</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that when we speak of the working class in Bochum and the Ruhr at this time we are speaking of a new phenomenon, composed overwhelmingly of people who had moved to a new home, frequently over long distances, in search of work.

We may at this point consider a number of important features of the new working class which had an important impact on reactions to the new and dynamic environment in which it found itself.

In the first place, workers formed - at least in numerical terms - the dominant class in the Ruhr. In 1907 some 76 per cent of the economically active population of Bochum were classified as manual workers (Arbeiter); in Dortmund the proportion was almost the same at 74 per cent. In the mining villages of the Landkreis the proportion was even higher: "It is in the nature of coal mining that there is, even today, little if any middle class employment". Moreover, the chances of social mobility out of the manual working class were slim: from a sample of Bochum manual workers of 1880 who were still in the town ten years later, only 8 per cent had managed to move into non-manual work; by 1901 fewer than 18 per cent of those who were still there had moved into non-manual work; amongst miners the proportions were even lower.

The Ruhr was thus an overwhelmingly working class society. But this working class was far from homogenous. The natives were sometimes very hostile to new immigrants, particularly when the latter had a different language and culture. In 1881 the Bochum Chamber of Commerce reported that the increase in "bodily injuries, moral offences, cases of resistance to state authority and in general actions and crimes stemming from rough dispositions, was undoubtedly a consequence of the renewed influx of many dubious elements into our district". We will see in the next chapter

how housing patterns helped to reinforce social and cultural divisions, particularly between natives and immigrants. But even the newcomers themselves were far from united. Most came from the Rhineland or Westphalia, but a substantial minority (24 per cent of the entire population of Bochum in 1907) came from further afield. Half of these came from the north east provinces of East and West Prussia and Posen, 14 per cent from Hessen and Waldeck, and a third from other parts of Germany. Six per cent came from abroad, chiefly from Austria, the Netherlands and Italy. It was estimated that over 20 "languages and idioms" were spoken in the Ruhr.¹

The most distinctive single group of immigrants was the Poles. Because of the partition of the historical kingdom of Poland they were not classified as a distinct national group: most of those in the Ruhr were German citizens. Consequently there are no exact figures for the number of Poles in the area. The usual index used is the number of Polish speakers, although this creates problems since it includes Masurians who, although generally Polish speaking, were Protestant and strongly anti-Polish and pro-German in outlook; it could also include those with two languages. Different censuses give very different results.² However, according to the official Prussian statistics while

1. Köllmann "Binnenwanderung und Bevölkerungsstrukturen" p.220; Statistisches Jahrbuch deutscher Städte Bd.11; StAB, 481, RPA to Minister des Innern 28.11.1907.

there were only 16 Polish speakers in the Rhineland and Westphalia in 1861, the number had grown to over 33,000 by 1890, and reached 131,000 in 1900 and 279,000 in 1910.¹ In the town of Bochum it was estimated that Polish speakers formed two per cent of the population in 1890 and nearly five per cent in 1910; the proportion in the Landkreis in the latter year was said to be nine per cent.² According, however, to the biennial census carried out in Westphalia from 1902 - a census which consistently produced higher figures than the normal Prussian census - from 1904 onwards Polish speakers formed around a fifth of the population of the Landkreis. Of these Polish speakers around two in five were Masurians.³

Whatever the precise numbers, the impact of these immigrants was considerable. One observer noted that all the major shops displayed a sign: "Ustaja polski" - Polish spoken here.⁴ Like other groups of immigrants to the Ruhr, the Poles tended to live and marry with others from their homeland. It was reported that the Poles in the south Bochum district "almost all teach their children to read and write Polish. They stay more and more together and avoid everything German".⁵ Polish social clubs proliferated and there were Polish shops, banks,

1. ibid. p.1141.
5. StAB, h82, Amt Bochum II to KLB 13.8.1914; Croon "Studien" p.95. In 1900 fewer than a quarter of migrant miners marrying in Bochum married local women; the proportion was higher among skilled metal-workers. Crew Industry and Community p.291.
building societies etc. These isolationist tendencies were vigorously encouraged by the Polish nationalists, who became an increasingly powerful political and cultural force. In 1898 the nationalist paper urged:

"Polish parents! Teach your children to speak, read and write Polish! He who allows his offspring to become German is no Pole".  

In the following year Poles were warned of the dangers of marrying non-Poles, and urged to reflect on the exemplary princess Wanda of Cracow who had killed herself rather than marry a German prince. Not surprisingly, the Poles tended to concentrate in certain geographical localities: in 1899 Horsthausen (by Herne) was described as "predominantly populated by Poles", and in 1910 areas such as Bergen and Gerthe (both to the north of Bochum) had well above the average number of Poles, while Querenburg (to the south) and Harpen (to the east) had very few. The concentrations were often around particular pits: even in 1899, before the largest influx of Poles into the Ruhr, it was claimed that "nineteen pits can practically be described as Polish mines, since more than half of their workers are Poles or German-Poles". Most of these were north of the older Ruhr towns such as Bochum: four for example were in the Gelsenkirchen area, four near Herne and three near Recklinghausen; one, however, was south of Bochum - Dannenbaum, where over 70 per cent of the workers were thought to be Polish speakers.

2. StAB, h50, Wiarius Polski 15.7.1899.
4. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.20. See also W. Brepohl Der Aufbau des Ruhrvolkes im Zuge der Ost-West-Migration (Recklinghausen, 1948) pp. 2th-2h5.
Marked ethnic and cultural differences were one characteristic of the newly forming working class in the Ruhr: the differences and their effects will be discussed further in later chapters. Another feature was the sharp distinction between the roles of men and women. The mines and factories offered excellent job opportunities to men and youths, but the overwhelming importance of heavy industry meant that there were few comparable opportunities for women. Bochum had had small textile and silk industries which had offered paid work to women, but both industries declined in the 1870's and 1880's. Cheap competition and lack of sufficient modernization led to the Bochum Chamber of Commerce's comment in 1878: "The manufacture of cloth has been in steady decline for a number of years in our district, so that one can scarcely speak of its manufacture now". The silk industry survived a little longer and offered some female employment. Silk weaving was still done at home in the 1870's and although demand fluctuated suddenly in response to changes in fashion the industry appeared to have a viable future. In 1881 the Chamber of Commerce reported:

"Factory activity in silk products was steady during 1881 and the number of looms increased in the various districts. It was particularly remarkable that in the mining areas many young people registered as weavers' apprentices, hoping to be able to earn before their sixteenth year. We can only welcome the fact that the textile industry is spreading in the mining districts since although it at first competes in the labour markets it offers to many girls, the daughters of miners and foundry workers, the possibility of raising their parents' family income through their earnings and thereby their general standard of living. The number of women and girls working at weaving - at first mostly on the preparatory work - is already several hundred in our district, and will certainly develop further from these beginnings".  

1. VWA, HKB Jahresbericht 1878 p.29
2. ibid. 1881.
These hopes were soon dashed. Changes in fashion combined with growing competition meant that by the end of 1882 many weavers were without work. By the mid-1880's steam power was effectively ending all domestic silk weaving.¹

The 1907 census clearly demonstrated the lack of jobs for women. In Bochum 45,993 people were classified as economically active (erwerbstätig) on a full-time basis in agriculture, industry, commerce, domestic service, public service and the professions. Of these 40,644 (88 per cent) were men and only 5,349 (12 per cent) were women. The proportion of women was even lower if one looks just at those people classified as manual workers (Arbeiter) in agriculture, industry and commerce and those in domestic service: of 35,354 such persons 31,791 (90 per cent) were men and 3,563 (10 per cent) were women.² Moreover, of those women who did have paid employment very few were engaged in the main industries of the area. Only five women in Bochum were employed in the mining industry, compared to nearly 15,000 men; and seven women were active in foundry work (Eisengiesserei) as against 2,556 men. Very few women worked in the various metal trades classified in the census. The trade which provided the most female employment was commerce, in which 1,283 women worked full-time in 1907: most of them probably as shop assistants. Some 882 women had full-time employment in domestic service in Bochum; 500 were needlewomen, probably working for the most part at home; ¹²²

¹. ibid. 1882, 1886.
². Statistik des deutschen Reiches Bd.207 p.152.
were in the clothing industry - again many probably working at home. Then came inns (364 employed full-time), health services (316), and education (281).

Nor was the position much better with regard to part-time jobs. No women were employed on a part-time basis in the mining or metal industries. The only substantial part-time employer of women was agriculture: 1,276 women in Bochum were classified as working part-time in this sector in 1907; it is not clear what activities were covered by this heading, but it probably included a substantial number of small plots and allotments. Apart from this the only significant part-time employment for women was in inns (166 women) and commerce (160). In the areas outside the town the position was even more bleak: of 1,0957 people employed full-time in agriculture, industry, commerce, domestic service and the professions only 2,776 (seven per cent) were women, and of these the largest single group were in agriculture.

Women in paid employment thus formed a small minority both of the labour force and of all women. The bulk of employed women - apart perhaps from those in "agriculture" - appear to have been girls who worked for a short while before marriage, but ceased on marriage or soon after. The absence of interesting or well-paid employment also encouraged early marriages. Women played a vital part in the life of the area, but it was

2. *ibid.*
overwhelmingly within their families and not in paid employment.
Housekeeping for a miner's family (which often included one or more
lodgers) was an arduous task: in addition to the usual difficulties
of budgeting on a limited income, especially when the family was large,
the work was particularly unrelenting: the mines operated with two main
shifts (normally 6.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. to 10 p.m.) and a
small night shift; if, as was common, the men in the house worked
different shifts, someone would be setting off for work and returning,
tired and hungry, at all hours of day and night; their patterns were
different again from those of the children.¹ But despite the importance
of women's work in the family, few women provided a source of income to
the family, unless they took lodgers or worked at the family's allotment:
there was normally no safety-net of female earnings such as existed in
such diverse areas as contemporary London or the Oxfordshire countryside;
the general lack even of experience of domestic service meant that miners'
wives in the Ruhr were less able to help out their families in times of
need by taking in washing or ironing or by doing cleaning than were the
women in more stable and long-established towns such as Remscheid.²
Miners' families depended for their actual income almost entirely on the
earnings of husband, sons and lodgers.

The process and nature of industrialization in the Ruhr thus produced

1. The position of working class women in the Ruhr is excellently discussed
in Fischer-Eckert Lage der Frauen. See also Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus
pp.57-70; N. Dennis, F. Henriques and C. Slaughter Coal is our Life
(London, 1969 edition) chapter V; D. Douglass "The Durham Pitman" in
Samuel (ed) Miners, Quarrymen and Saltworkers p.267.

2. For English examples of the vital role of women's earnings in the working
class family economy, see A.S. Jasper A. Hoxton Childhood (London, 1971);
R. Samuel "Quarry Roughs" in Samuel (ed) Village Life and Labour p.181;
for the contrast between Remscheid and the Ruhr, see Lucas
Arbeiterradikalismus pp. 61-65.
a numerically dominant but unhomogeneous working class, and a society in which there was sharp differentiation between the economic and social roles of the two sexes. It was also a highly unsettled and geographically mobile society. An important element in the liberalization of the law on the mining industry and the withdrawal of detailed state control in the 1850's and 1860's was the removal of earlier restrictions on the freedom of employees to change their place of employment; the merger of the various miners' social and insurance organisations - the Knaapschaften - also reduced the impediments to movement.¹ Many of the immigrants, having once uprooted themselves from their homes were not readily inclined to settle down. They had come with the sole aim of making money and had no ties with the place in which they found themselves. Many sent much of their pay back home (so that the post offices were said to be full after pay days) and saw their spell in the Ruhr merely as a means of saving enough to buy a farm or small business back home: it was reported that the Poles, "almost without exception return home as soon as they have accumulated a substantial sum of money."² An example was one Antoni Podeszwa, born in Upper Silesia, who in 1889 followed his six brothers to the Ruhr in search of work; after 17 years, in which he had been active in the Polish miners' union, he returned home in 1906 with 4,000 marks savings and set himself up as a farmer.³ Such


2. StAB, h50, Amt Pochum I to KLB 27.7.1899; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter pp. 216-217.

success was probably rare, but it illustrates a widely held aim. Many families, even after living for some time in the area, still felt uprooted and looked forward to the day when they could return "home". Some workers indeed migrated on a seasonal basis, or just for a few years prior to marriage.¹

One effect of this rootlessness was that it was not psychologically difficult to move from one job to another, or from one town or village to another, if there was a prospect of better pay or conditions. The almost constant demand for new labour in the region meant that the opportunities for movement were there and were frequently just as appealing to those already in the Ruhr as to those outside. We find, therefore, that not only was there large scale migration to the area from outside, but that there was very considerable movement within the Ruhr itself. In almost every year between 1893 and 1912 the registered new arrivals in Bochum numbered between 20 and 30 per cent of the town's existing population, while the registered departures were nearly as numerous.²


2. Statistisches Jahrbuch Deutscher Städte (1893-1914). Crew found that from a sample of miners in Bochum in 1880 only 39 per cent were still in the town ten years later, and 19 percent in 1901. Langewiesche has stressed that migration was not simply a one-way process from country to town, but involved considerable movements of people from towns to the countryside and from one town to others. Crew Industry and Community p.217; D. Langewiesche "Wanderungsbewegungen in der Hochindustrialisierungsperiode. Regionale, interstädtische Mobilität in Deutschland 1880-1914" in Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Bd.64 (1977) p.18.
Most of the new arrivals, in other words, moved on from Bochum after a short or long sojourn in the town.

Large groups sometimes made these moves together. In 1905 the Deutscher Kaiser mine near Oberhausen sought to recruit men in Jangendreer, outside Bochum, partly because the mine's manager had formerly worked at Neu Iserlohn, one of the pits near Jangendreer. Average earnings for hewers in the Ruhr generally stood at Mfl.86 a shift, but the men were offered M5.50 at Deutscher Kaiser. In the end about 300 Jangendreer men took up the offer. Many were Poles or Italians, and about half were married. A Dortmund paper commented:

"The reason why the miners change their homes so easily is to be found in the conditions offered to them. They receive a good wage, free transport of their belongings, and the rent they owe here is covered. In addition, the director of the Deutscher Kaiser pit where the men have found work is well liked by the miners since he used to be mine manager of Shaft I of Neu Iserlohn."

Most of the miners left together on 31 August:

"This morning there was a great deal of activity in the streets leading to the station, with miners carrying packed suitcases. With few exceptions these men have left the mines here and will take up work in the Oberhausen area. The departure of so many workers is a hard blow for the locality". 1

But such mass movements were not the most common form of internal migration within the Ruhr. More common was the case of an individual miner or a relatively small group who became dissatisfied with their earnings or conditions at one pit and sought something better elsewhere. At the Mons Cenis mine near Herne the coal was particularly difficult to

work and in the 1880's miners left so frequently that the very existence of the pit was in question. Others left involuntarily: particularly in the aftermath of strikes "agitators" were liable to dismissal.

Job-changing did not necessarily involve moving house. The mines of the Ruhr were often near enough to make it possible for a man to find a new job within walking distance of his home. In 1893 the young August Schmidt (later chairman of IG Bergbau und Energie) and his father were sacked from the Germania pit near Dortmund after participating in a strike; they eventually found work at Graf Scherin near Castrop, two hours walk away. Nevertheless, it frequently was necessary for a man who wished to take a new job to find a new home at the same time, particularly if he had lived in a company home, so that job-changing provided an important unsettling effect to mining communities. The total labour turnover in the pits was very considerable:

2. A. Schmidt Lang war der Weg (Bochum, 1958) pp.18-19.
3. Crew argues that miners were reluctant "to leave the protective warmth of the miner community" and to move elsewhere and suggests that "this stability added a dimension of individual continuity to the miner neighbourhood. People lived for a long time together and eventually grew to know each other well, and this by itself did much to create a sense of community among them". This assertion, however, is based on figures indicating that amongst workers who stayed in Bochum over 10 and 20 years, miners tended to stay in the same Gemeinde more than other workers; Crew ignores here his own evidence that miners generally stayed in Bochum less than most other categories of worker: Crew Industry and Community pp.72, 334.
Table 6 Hirings and Departures as percentage of all miners employed, Ruhr mines, 1896-1913. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hirings (%)</th>
<th>Departures (%)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hirings (%)</th>
<th>Departures (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amount of job changing fluctuated with cyclical changes in the economy. During upswings - culminating in 1900, 1907 and 1913 - turnover increased, reflecting the growing demand for labour and the possibility of finding better pay at some new pit. When the economy faltered in 1901 and 1908 the turnover fell. Nevertheless, it was only in 1905, a year in which an industry-wide strike was followed by severe restrictions by employers on job changing, that the numbers starting and leaving jobs both fell significantly below half of the total number of men employed at the time. Despite cyclical fluctuations high labour turnover was endemic in the mines throughout this period. 2

---

1. Figures from the Allgemeine Knappschaftsverein, printed in Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.24. They do not agree exactly with those published in the official Zeitschrift für das Bergbau-, Hütten- und Salinenwesen, but the differences are minor.

2. Turnover appears to have been somewhat higher in the Ruhr than elsewhere in Germany, but was nonetheless high in Upper Silesia and perhaps elsewhere: Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.231; Kirchhoff Sozialpolitik p.161; Schofer Formation of a modern labor force pp.121-131; Langewiesche "Wanderungsbewegungen".
Not all those who left one pit immediately sought a job at another. Some left the industry completely, perhaps because of invalidity or because they had found a different job elsewhere. Some left the mines for a while but returned later. There were many who worked in the construction industry in the summer and in the pits in winter when building was impossible and demand for coal was high. 1 In general around half of those leaving mines went direct to another pit, while around two thirds of the rest eventually returned (although at the large Hannover and Hannibal pits to the north of Bochum, the proportion who went direct to another pit was higher, fluctuating between 66 and 81 per cent in 1900-10, with the exception of 1905). 2 The figures in Table 6 should not, therefore, be misconstrued as a measure only of those moving direct from one pit to another, but it does indicate the seriousness of job-changing in the mining industry in the Ruhr.

Job-changing was not restricted to the mines. Even in 1877 and 1878, in the depths of depression, the Bochumer Verein had a total of around 2,200 hirings and resignations each year while the total work force stood at between 2,500 and 2,700. The Chamber of Commerce commented:

"It is self-evident that with such a constant coming and going a thorough training for the individual workers in their tasks is made extraordinarily difficult and that the productivity as well as the prosperity of a large works is severely affected. In this respect the English and Belgian firms, who enjoy a much more stable and well schooled work force have a great advantage on us.

1. H. Münz Die Tage der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrrevier (Essen, 1909) p.29.
The reason for this turnover of workers lies essentially in their low incomes, which they hope to improve in some other job - usually without success. The less productive older workers stay true to the company, while the younger ones are encouraged to leave by the necessary wage reductions. 1

Normally, however, high labour turnover was a particular feature of economic booms. In 1899, for instance, the Westfälische Stahlwerke in Weitmar, to the south of Bochum, experienced very high turnover rates. In March alone it was reported that nearly 200 workers resigned, when the total workforce stood at some 1,510. The company concluded that they would have to introduce a system of one month's notice on both sides. 2 The following year saw the end of the boom.

The Chamber of Commerce reported:

"Industrial relations were generally satisfactory this year 1900. There were no stoppages. There were frequent complaints about the high turnover of workers and also about a noticeable drop in productivity, particularly from the smaller firms. With the change in the economic cycle, the end of the labour shortage and the possibility of laying off inefficient workers there has been an improvement .... " 3

The next boom reached its peak in 1907, and once again there was a spate of complaints about job-changing. One large engineering firm (not named) claimed that on main (monthly) pay days up to one third of the workers gave notice. 4 One Gelsenkirchen firm with around 890 workers saw 375 resignations in 1906 and 750 in 1907. The problem was common throughout the region and some firms resorted to special premium payments to discourage job-changing and poor working. The 1907 factory inspectorate report for the eastern Ruhr confirmed these stories:

1. StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1878 pp.5-6. This report was almost certainly written by Louis Baare.
2. IZF, Volksblatt 25.3.1899.
4. ibid. 1907.
"The labour turnover in the industrial works was unusually great in most areas up to around the end of the year. It degenerated into a calamity for some works. The great turnover of the first three quarters, following cyclical conditions, is the result of the fact that the workers easily tend to change their place of work during upswings when there is a general demand for labour. The dismissals resulting from the slackening business situation evidently played a part in the turnover of the last quarter. Those works employing a large number of unskilled workers have had the greatest part of the turnover. The large iron and steel works have particularly suffered. Up to 135 per cent of their average work force have given notice in these works". 1

In 1913 too a Bochum employer complained about the way in which his workers would not settle down:

"As a result of expansion of the plant I had to take on more workers. But the men lack to an extraordinary degree a sense of duty and a concern for lasting employment, so that of the many I have taken on only a very few stay permanently or for a long time and the turnover is very high. It was certainly encouraged by the fact that I operated without a system of mutual notice, so that the workers could leave when they liked. After the introduction of a requirement of two weeks notice the turnover has not been so great". 2

It is clear that job changing was common not only amongst the miners but also amongst workers in the metal industry.

The turnover figures conceal some differences between groups of workers. One observer reported: "The fluctuation is particularly prevalent amongst the unmarried workers and the Poles". 3 The official Zeitschrift für das Bergbau-, Hütten- und Salinenwesen commented in 1909: "As in the past the turnover came less from the older hewers and more from the younger single men, the apprentice hewers, the Schlepper and Bremser, who

1. STAM, RA I GA 193 Gewerbeaufsicht report for Regierungsbezirk Arnsberg 1907, p.28. See also Crew Industry and Community p.64.
are inclined to leave their former place of work for trivial reasons".¹ These contemporary observations were supported by the results of an official investigation into the closure of mines in 1904: six pits were involved in the Bochum area, employing 3,500 men; in the first half of the year nearly 1,000 (28 per cent) of these men had left for new areas: but while this included 39 per cent of the single men, only 16 percent of the married men had gone, and only three per cent of the 375 married men who owned their own homes.² On the other hand it has recently been suggested that amongst migrants the married men may have been even less stable than the single.³ The total turnover figures may also have been inflated by a certain number of people who changed their jobs a number of times in the course of a year. Nevertheless, while immigrants, the young and the unmarried may have been more willing to move than others, we should not forget that between them these groups comprised a substantial majority of the total labour force. Job-changing does not appear to have significantly varied from one part of the Ruhr to another.⁴ Movement can fairly be described as a general characteristic of working class life in the area - as perhaps elsewhere in industrializing Germany.⁵

2. WVA, K2 213 Denkschrift betr. die Stillegung verschiedener Steinkohlenzechen des Ruhr-Reviers.
3. Crew Industry and Community pp.62-63; the figures refer only to migrants, not to the population as a whole.
5. The high degree of working class mobility in Germany generally has recently been stressed: see L. Niethammer and F. Brüggemeier "Wie wohnten Arbeiter im Kaiserreich?" in Archiv für Sozialgeschichte Bd.XVI (1976); Tangeishe "Wanderungsbewegungen".
It is impossible to understand the characteristics or features of any large group of people in isolation from the specific historical forces which shaped them. It is clear from what we have already seen that the circumstances in which the working class in the Ruhr was formed imposed certain crucial features on it, affecting its social and political development. It was a class in the very process of formation, sustaining a rapid growth throughout the period, a growth fuelled by the large scale movement of people from the countryside which continued throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Numerically it was the dominant class in the area, yet, because the workers came from different parts of Germany and from abroad they had no common cultural or social background, and there was a significant minority who did not even speak German. Despite its numerical superiority, therefore, it was an unhomogeneous and potentially a divided body. Later we will see the crucial role of religion in this connection. The nature of the industrial processes, in the service of which these people were gathered in the Ruhr, encouraged the development and consolidation of a rigid differentiation of sex roles, making families crucially dependent on the man's wages, but making the "work" arena virtually a male preserve. Finally, we have seen how internal migration and job-changing continued throughout the period, contributing to the unsettled nature of the new society. When we speak of the "working class" in this context it is important to remember that its members in any particular locality or works were constantly changing. In such a setting the prospects for the development of community feeling were poor. We are not, in other words, dealing with an established and settled community. We see a class numerically strong but socially dis-orientated, geographically unsettled and culturally diffuse.
CHAPTER 2: HOUSING

The social transformation of an area on the scale described in the last chapter inevitably threw up new and hitherto unprecedented problems. One such problem which carried with it important implications for the continued development of the new society, was that of housing. Both the problem and the solutions found for it throw light on the nature of society and social relations at the time.

A housing "problem" first appeared in Bochum in the 1860's, under the impact of the growing population. In 1861 the town authorities complained:

"With the rapid population growth of the last few years the housing question has also appeared here in an acute form. The rents rise quite enormously, often up to three times their former levels, and the housing shortage nonetheless remains very great". 1

Three years later the problem seemed even worse:

"One evil from which the labouring classes here also suffer and which becomes worse from day to day is the absence of sufficient housing. A walk amongst our workers' homes makes plain again and again a situation which is not worse in the largest cities. A large number of families share their limited accommodation with one or several lodgers. The same rooms often serve for living, sleeping, cooking, washing and for all other domestic activities. People of all ages and both sexes are not separated". 2

Nevertheless, building did go ahead to try to meet the increasing demand for housing. The economic boom in particular led to a substantial growth in speculative house building, often by small builders. The Griesenbach quarter in the south-west of Bochum was the area with the

2. ibid. 1864 p.1.
greatest amount of building, with entire new streets being laid down. The area was not very suitable, being damp and poorly drained and sometimes afflicted with standing water. The quality of the new buildings was also often poor: the outer walls were fairly strong but internal ones were not very solid. Because of the price of land the houses were kept as narrow as possible. They were generally of three stories, with the owner using one floor and letting the others. Despite the limitations of the new houses, the building was sufficient to largely eliminate the worst of the shortage: "At the beginning of 1873 there was a definite shortage of homes, especially medium and small ones; by the end of the year, however, this had essentially been overcome".¹ Because land had already been bought up at high prices during the boom, building continued in the first year or so of the depression. As the depression continued through the 1870's, however, wages fell and the town's population ceased to grow, with the result that the bottom dropped out of the housing market. In 1875 the first effects were felt:

"There was a definite surplus of homes, especially in the south-west of the town and in the new streets in other parts, and as a result the rents have fallen, sometimes quite markedly compared with last year". ²

A year later the situation was even more dramatic: "Whole rows of houses are standing empty, particularly at the edge of town, and rents are still falling rapidly, particularly in the more outlying parts".³

1. ibid. 1873 p.13; Croon "Studien" p.92.
2. StAB, Magistratsbericht 1875 p.25.
3. ibid. 1876 p.15.
The result, as table 7 shows, was that new building came to a halt:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Houses Built</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The crash of the 1870's implanted a lasting caution in the minds of private builders in Bochum. Henceforth they were more careful before committing themselves to ensure that the demand was strong and likely to last. This was particularly the case when it came to cheaper accommodation, of the sort that working class families could afford, since it was they who were most vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Building for the more expensive market was a safer bet:

"Our housing situation has shown an astonishing elasticity, when one recalls that in 1876, with a population of around 28,000, there were just about as many homes available as in 1882 with a population of around 38,000. Even today [1883], when there has been a definite improvement in the rent situation, at least as far as the landlord is concerned, it is still true that despite the years of stagnation in private building there is no shortage of good and medium class housing, whereas there is a need for workers' houses - a need which grows more and more with the expansion of industry". 2

The Chamber of Commerce made the same point in the following year:

"There was somewhat more building this year than in the preceding one, but the housing shortage which in many parts of the district is constantly growing was by no means overcome. There was a particular shortage of suitable accommodation for workers, since practically all new building is concerned exclusively with providing larger homes". 3

1. Lange "Wohnungsverhältnisse" p.78.
2. StAB, Magistratsbericht 1881/2.
The 1880's saw the beginning of the recovery from the economic slump and a revived demand for labour. Population growth resumed its hectic path. This, combined with the reluctance of private builders to build appropriate housing, created a veritable housing crisis. The housing conditions of the working class became much worse even as the worst of the industrial slump (and with it unemployment and low wages) ended. This was reflected in the growth of homelessness in the early 1880's. In 1883 homelessness became so significant a problem that for the first time the town authorities were compelled to intervene, putting some homeless families in the isolation hospital (Reserve-Lazareth). In summer 1884 fear of a possible cholera outbreak meant that the hospital was needed for its proper function, and a special barracks was built for homeless and destitute families. By October 20 families were living there, paying a rent of one mark a week, which they earned by breaking stones for the town. The town's annual report emphasized the moral failings of those needing help:

"The families who have been helped belong to the dregs of society, though only two of them are being permanently helped from public poor relief. Drink and idleness were for most of them the cause of their homelessness. Landlords would not accept them even when rooms were free because they could not rely on the rent being paid". 1

But the mayor of Bochum, who did not dispute many of the moral failings of those concerned, pointed out in a special study that the situation was primarily a result of an absolute shortage of housing. Even when payment of rent was guaranteed and even when the poor relief authorities

1. StAB, Magistratsbericht 1884 pp.140-145.
had made the "greatest conceivable efforts" to find private accommoda-
tion, no result was achieved "since because of the immigration from out-
side all the accommodation in the town was occupied, and because there
was an absolute shortage of homes for the working population of the
town, as has been confirmed by official researches." 1

Homelessness and destitution remained major problems throughout the
1880's. In 1885 a second barracks was opened, and in 1889 the isola-
tion hospital had to be brought back into service since the barracks
were full:

"Because of the high rents, particularly for small homes, and the
most varied factors which must mostly be blamed on the unreliability
and unsoundness of the persons concerned, homelessness was suffered
by various families. Even though various workers' houses have been
built their number stands in no relation to the growth of working
class families". 2

Building improved from the disastrous level of the late 1870's, but did
not keep pace with the need. There was particularly little speculative
building and what there was was aimed primarily at the richer market.
In 1890 the town authorities could report that thanks to the building of
the previous two years, "the demand for better and medium class housing
can be regarded as adequately met for the immediate future, while
housing for workers remains in short supply and relatively expensive." 3
The number of homeless people accommodated by the poor relief authorities
did not reach its peak until 1891, when over 300 people were housed in

1. Lange "Wohnungsverhältnisse" p.88.
2. StAB, Magistratsbericht 1889/90 p.53.
3. ibid. p.43.
the barracks. The figure dropped subsequently, fluctuating in the region of 100 to 170 until 1909, after which it dropped still lower.¹

The 1890's saw an increase in the amount of housing available. In 1900 the Chamber of Commerce estimated that in its district (including Gelsenkirchen, Witten, Hattingen and Herne in addition to Bochum) the population had grown by around 40 per cent between 1892 and 1899, while the building licences issued for housing increased by nearly 70 per cent: "in general there is no longer a real shortage of housing".² Homelessness did not reappear before the war as a major social problem.

The reports on housing in the town's annual reports became brief. When, following the example of other cities, a "building advisory office" (Bauberatungsstelle) was established in Bochum in 1911, its main concern was with the aesthetics of new buildings.³

Although the crisis of the 1880's was largely overcome and absolute destitution and homelessness declined, the underlying housing situation remained gloomy. Rents were high. In the early 1880's it was thought that many working class families were paying over a fifth of their income in rent.⁴ In 1905 a housing association, the Westfälischer Verein zur Förderung des Kleinwohnungswesens, made a substantial survey

1. StAB, Magistratsberichte.
2. WWA, HKB Jahresbericht 1899.
4. Lange "Wohnungsverhältnisse" p.95.
of housing standards in several Westphalian towns, concentrating on the small dwellings of up to five rooms in which the bulk of the population lived. They regarded fifteen per cent of a family's income as a reasonable rent, but concluded that in Bochum and most Ruhr towns a great many families were paying above this level. Average annual earnings for mineworkers in the Ruhr in 1905 were slightly under 1,200 marks, and the average earnings of workers in the Bochumer Verein's steel and engineering works were about 1,270 marks. Average rents in Bochum varied according to the size of the dwelling, being 150 marks for a two-room dwelling, 225 marks for a three-room one, 275 for four rooms and 333 marks for five rooms. Clearly, family circumstances differed considerably and the data do not permit a detailed comparison of family income with expenditure on rent. Nevertheless, we are justified in concluding that many families were compelled either to live in extremely cramped conditions or pay a rent high in relation to their income - or both.

Many families did indeed live on top of one another. The Verein took as their measure of overcrowding a density of over two people per room (including the kitchen). Today we might consider a density of over one person per room as an equally appropriate measure. Table 8 illustrates the degree of overcrowding under both criteria in the housing of several Ruhr industrial towns, with Münster and Arnsberg as non-

1. Westfälischer Verein Ergebnisse I pp.29-30; Koch Bergarbeiter -bewegung p.119; Däbritz Bochumer Verein Table 4.
industrial controls:

Table 8 Overcrowding in urban housing, 1905.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total homes</th>
<th>Homes with over 2 persons per room</th>
<th>Homes with over 1 person per room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mönster</td>
<td>7,783</td>
<td>531 (7%)</td>
<td>3,539 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnsberg</td>
<td>1,074</td>
<td>143 (13%)</td>
<td>543 (51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bochum</td>
<td>17,014</td>
<td>1,124 (21%)</td>
<td>11,952 (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recklinghausen</td>
<td>7,301</td>
<td>1,806 (25%)</td>
<td>5,275 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herne</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>1,135 (24%)</td>
<td>3,374 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hörde</td>
<td>5,024</td>
<td>1,198 (24%)</td>
<td>3,608 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witten</td>
<td>6,166</td>
<td>1,621 (25%)</td>
<td>4,679 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hattingen</td>
<td>1,681</td>
<td>256 (15%)</td>
<td>1,028 (61%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey relates only to small homes, those of up to five rooms.

But it is clear that a very substantial proportion of the housing stock was severely overcrowded. The proportion of people who were living in such cramped accommodation was even larger. In Bochum nearly 30,500 people - or 40 per cent of those covered by the survey - were living at densities of over two persons per room, and almost 70,000 - 81 per cent - were living with more than one person per room. These figures indicate that even if acute homelessness such as that which had appeared in the 1880's had declined, there was still a severe underlying housing shortage.


2. ibid. The situation was comparable with that in the East End of London in the 1890's: Stedman Jones Outcast London pp.219-20.
Overcrowding was more common in smaller homes than in larger ones.

This becomes clear if we compare the proportion of one to three room dwellings with over two inhabitants per room with the proportion for homes of four and five rooms:

Table 9 Overcrowding by size of dwelling, 1905.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-3 room dwellings with over 2 persons (per cent)</th>
<th>4-5 room dwellings with over 2 persons (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Münster</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnsberg</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bochum</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recklinghausen</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herne</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hörde</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witten</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hattingen</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overcrowding was thus concentrated predominantly, if not exclusively, in the smaller homes. In this respect the situation had, at least in Bochum, worsened over the years. A survey in 1871 had shown that in Bochum there had then been an average density of 1.9 persons per room in dwellings of up to five rooms. In 1905 the overall position had improved: there were now 1.6 persons per room. But the position became worse in the smallest dwellings:

Table 10  People per room by size of dwelling, Bochum 1871 and 1905.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling of rooms</th>
<th>Total no. of rooms (1871)</th>
<th>Total no. of inhabitants (1871)</th>
<th>Av. no. of people per room (1871)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>5,166</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,030</td>
<td>5,539</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,760</td>
<td>2,734</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>1,312</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>7,829</td>
<td>15,128</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling of rooms</th>
<th>Total no. of rooms (1905)</th>
<th>Total no. of inhabitants (1905)</th>
<th>Av. no. of people per room (1905)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>1,513</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10,854</td>
<td>20,988</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20,049</td>
<td>31,620</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12,168</td>
<td>17,390</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7,025</td>
<td>7,863</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>50,580</td>
<td>82,374</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was thus a greater density of people in the one and two room homes in 1905 than in 1871, while the situation in the larger dwellings had improved. Despite the building of the 1890's and early 1900's the provision of housing had scarcely managed to keep pace with the growth of population, and in so far as there had been an improvement it had come at the higher end of the social scale. The situation of the worst off had deteriorated. There were some extreme cases: in Bochum in 1905 there were reckoned to be no less than 33 one room dwellings with ten or more people living in them, and there were similar instances in the other towns surveyed. The Verein concluded that their investigation showed:

1. ibid.; StAB, Magistratsbericht 1871; Lange "Wohnungsverhältnisse" p.87.
"how large groups of the population are concentrated in the narrowest living space in these towns. The needs of workers' families for air and space are not usually too highly estimated. These figures show unhealthy housing for the large masses of the population". 1

The situation was made even worse in some instances by the practice of some craftsmen and artisans, such as tailors and shoe-makers, of using their living room simultaneously as a work-room. 2 One room often served as living room, kitchen, washroom and bedroom. 3 One important practice was that of taking lodgers or boarders. In Bochum nearly ten per cent of the homes surveyed in 1905 had one or more boarders, mostly in the larger dwellings but a substantial number in the one or two room homes. Even in the larger homes boarders caused drastic overcrowding since there was frequently more than one in the household. In all the Ruhr towns surveyed around half of all the families with boarders took more than one. 4 The Verein commented:

"There is a direct connection between boarding and the overcrowding of small homes in these areas. An improvement in conditions in this respect would therefore only be achieved if good and inexpensive accommodation outside family housing were provided for single workers". 5

The Verein recommended that the taking of lodgers in one room homes be made illegal, but it is doubtful whether such measures could ever have had more than a marginal impact on the problem. 6 The excessive taking

2. Jangle "Wohnungsverhältnisse" p.87.
3. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.215
5. ibid. II p.17
6. ibid. II p.11. For a proposed tougher police regulation of the practice, see WJA, K2 3h2.
of boarders was a direct reflection of the deeper problem of insufficient and therefore too expensive housing at the cheaper end of the market. The high cost of housing forced poor families either to squeeze into cramped accommodation or to sublet some of their home to lodgers. In the most extreme cases they did both. After the war the Bochum local authority estimated that prior to 1914 the population had been outstripping the growth of the housing stock:

"The incomes of large sections of the population were such that with the rents of the time many families were unable to rent a home suitable and large enough for their needs. Where necessity did not stand in the way there was frequently a false sense of economy and the importance of good accommodation was seriously undervalued. The result was that in Bochum many homes - particularly the smaller and cheaper ones - were overcrowded and left much to be desired in relation to hygiene and morality". 1

Housing and Public Health

The shortage of good housing and the resultant overcrowding had various undesirable results. In the first place it hampered the improvement of public health. Disease was encouraged by the lack of proper sanitation in many homes; by the proximity in which people lived with each other in these overcrowded conditions; and by the slow development of public sanitary reform in the town generally. Cholera appeared in Bochum in 1849 and returned with disastrous force in 1866. The 1866 outbreak was centred on the Essen area, and at the Zollverein mine alone 80 miners died. 2 In Bochum 230 people were affected by the disease and 86 of them died. The epidemic was closely related to poor

1. StAB, Regierungsbericht 1913-24 p.107. Standards in the Ruhr were by no means the worst in Germany. See Niethammer and Brüggemeier "Wie wohnten Arbeiter?" pp.96-101.

2. M. Seippel Bochum Einst und Jetzt (Bochum, 1901) p.181; Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Die Entwicklung des Niederrheinisch-Westfälisch Steinkohlenbergbaus (Berlin, 1904) XII p.94.
housing. The town authorities reported:

"The disease was present virtually throughout the town but was most virulent in parts where bad housing and unhealthy neighbourhoods generally favour the spreading of epidemics .... The disease appeared in the Gerberstrasse, and just as this street has been particularly badly affected by epidemics once they are established so this time it was the disease's focus. The poor state of the land evidently played an essential part. It is therefore our intention to secure the improved drainage of the Gerberstrasse and the nearby streets and thereby an improvement in the general state of the terrain. This will be achieved by a thorough regulation of the neighbouring mill streams, particularly through the establishment of an adequate incline. The town engineer is already engaged on the preparations". 1

What made the outbreak even worse was the fact that it coincided with a smallpox epidemic. Smallpox had appeared in Bochum in the 1850's and reappeared in December 1865. 1,347 cases were reported in 1866 and 143 died. From nearly 2,000 school children in the town 1,20 - more than one in five - were hit by the disease and 36 died. The death rate in the town, which had been fluctuating around 31 per thousand in previous years, stood at almost 73 per thousand in 1866 under the impact of this combination.2

Despite these outbreaks little was done to improve the town's sanitation. The collection of refuse was improved but little else was achieved.3

In 1871 smallpox returned, even more disastrously than before. This time 2,719 people - or almost 13 per cent of the town's population - were affected by the disease, and 333 died. All children under twelve were vaccinated and there was a general disinfection campaign.4

2. ibid. p.26; Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Entwicklung des ...Steinkohlenbergbaues XII p.94. The sanitary situation in Bochum and other Ruhr towns was compared unfavourably with London and Manchester: StAB, Magistratsbericht 1868.
4. ibid. 1871 p.55
This epidemic appears to have stimulated the town's authorities to take action to improve public sanitation. In 1872 an engineer was brought in from Berlin to devise a drainage plan for the entire town. He proposed to divide Bochum into two drainage areas, both equipped with adequate sewage farms. His proposals were only partially approved, however, mainly because of the high cost of purchasing land for the sewage farms on the town's perimeter. Instead it was decided to limit the plans to the removal of rain and domestic water and to leave sewage disposal to the traditional method of the cess-pool. Nevertheless, despite the limited nature of the programme as adopted, it did mark the beginning of a sustained effort to improve the sanitary provisions of the town. Work continued without interruption through subsequent decades on improving the water supply and town drainage. In 1886 the mayor could write that "virtually all the houses in the town are supplied with the necessary water by the town water supply". Nevertheless, there was opposition to the programme: "complaints have come from individual house owners who still use wells with bad water or let their tenants use them to avoid the water charge. Thanks to the energetic action of the police such wells have been closed off and these houses connected to the water supply". By 1895 it was reported that nearly all the more populous parts of the town were effectively drained.

1. ibid. 1873 p.114.
2. Lange "Wohnungsverhältnisse" p.86
3. StAB, Magistratsbericht 1895/6 p.50.
Other improvements were being made at the same time. By the end of the century virtually all the town's streets had been paved and the number of gas lights increased from 70 in 1860 to 877; 355 of these lights burned all night.\(^1\)

Despite these improvements, however, the sanitation system in Bochum was far from adequate by the turn of the century. Potentially dangerous wells were still in use, and appear to have been a contributory cause of outbreaks of typhus in 1906 and 1907.\(^2\) Domestic toilets were still not linked up with the main drainage system. It was only after the extension of the town's boundaries in 1904 that new and more comprehensive plans were developed with the aim of incorporating the disposal of domestic sewage into the general drainage system. In 1908 government approval for the plan was granted, and work was underway in the following years. Nevertheless, as late as 1924 a great deal remained to be done before the town was fully equipped with a modern sewage disposal system.\(^3\) The 1905 housing survey referred to above revealed that many homes did not have their own toilet: in \(\frac{3}{4}\) per cent of the homes surveyed the family had to share with others; 263 dwellings were found without apparent access to any toilet at all.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Seippel Bochum Einst und Jetzt pp.154, 163.
\(^2\) StAB, Magistratsbericht 1906 p.53; ibid. 1907 p.75.
\(^3\) ibid. 1904-1924.
\(^4\) Westfälischer Verein Ergebnisse II p.43.
Improved drainage and sewage disposal were not the only measures taken to try to improve the general health of the area. In 1892 an office was established to test the quality of food sold in the town, and from 1895 the inspection was extended to the surrounding Landkreis. In the first years of the tests between 20 and 30 per cent of the food tested was below standard; by the early 1900's the proportion had dropped to around 10 per cent in the town, although it remained higher in the Landkreis. Other health measures included hospital building (there were three major ones in Bochum in 1901, and a further one was founded in 1910), and the subjection of prostitutes to regular health checks. On the other hand by 1907 Bochum was one of the few Prussian towns without an official school doctor.

Improved public sanitation was accompanied by a gradual decline in the death rate and an absence of disastrous epidemics such as those experienced in the 1860's and early 1870's. We have seen that the overall death rate in Bochum fell from between 35 and 28 per thousand in 1875-86 to between 20 and 15 per thousand in 1905-12. The proportion of deaths during the first year of life also declined. In five of the eight years 1893-1900 there were between eight and nine such deaths per thousand population, and in 1899 the number rose to 11.7 per thousand. In no year between 1901 and 1912 did the figure reach eight per thousand, and in 1912 it fell as low as 5.6. Cholera did not reappear in Bochum.

1. StAB, Magistratsberichte.
2. ibid. 1901 p.48; IZF, Tremonia 28.5.1910.
4. See chapter 1 above.
5. Statistisches Jahrbuch deutscher Städte
although in 1884 preparations were made to deal with a possible outbreak. The only reappearance of smallpox was in 1904, when it was probably introduced by a Belgian woman. It did not have the virulence of earlier outbreaks. 25 cases were identified in Bochum itself, four in the Landkreis, and one in Witten. Four people died. All the sick were isolated and their homes closed up. There was a general disinfection and 50,000 people were vaccinated. In a few months the outbreak was eliminated.

Despite these improvements, however, there is no doubt that generally the area was far from healthy. Typhoid was endemic and caused more deaths in relation to the size of the population in the Ruhr than in Prussia as a whole. There was an epidemic in Gelsenkirchen in 1901. In Bochum 76 cases were reported in 1904, and between 1906 and 1911 the number fluctuated between 33 and 84 each year: over these six years there were 320 cases and 46 deaths from typhoid. The cause was impure water and foodstuffs, and cases tended to concentrate in certain insalubrious districts of the town. Dysentery, which is another ingested disease, usually caused by impure water and foodstuffs, also tended to be concentrated in the less salubrious areas of the town. The outbreak in the summer of 1906, for instance, centred on the Bruchstrasse and its side streets. In 1908 it reached epidemic propor-

1. StAB, Magistratsbericht 1884/5 p.15.
2. ibid. 1904/5 p.81.
3. Heinrichsbaumer Industrielle Siedlung p.11.
4. Data for the rest of this discussion from StAB, Magistratsberichte.
tions in the Thomasstrasse and nearby streets where there were 54 cases, while only 27 cases were reported in the rest of the town. Eleven died in this outbreak. In 1909 dysentery was again concentrated in the older parts of the town, the Thomasstrasse, Gerberstrasse and Bruchstrasse. Scarlet fever and diphtheria, which are breathed in, were also common: in 1905, scarlet fever was reported to be "epidemic" in Bochum; the disease was reported to be most common in working families with many children. In 1905, when both scarlet fever and diphtheria increased, it was reported: "Chronic centres of disease are formed in streets heavily populated with large families". Overcrowded unsanitary housing conditions thus contributed directly to the ill-health and disease which afflicted working class families.

There were occasional epidemics of less common diseases, again probably worsened by overcrowding. One such was cerebrospinal meningitis, a vicious disease which is inhaled and attacks the fluid around the brain. It appeared in Bochum in 1907, and from 77 reported cases 50 died. Again it was concentrated in a few streets in the old town. The following year it appeared in some of the outer areas: from 56 cases there were 31 deaths. Further cases were reported in both 1909 and 1910.

The most common illnesses were connected with the respiratory organs. In 1893, a year without any major outbreak of disease, it was estimated that thirteen per cent of the deaths in the town were due to "consumption".

1. On Germany generally, see Niethammer and Brüggemeier "Wie wohnten Arbeiter?" pp. 92-94.
(Lungenschwindsucht - tuberculosis). A further twenty per cent were caused by "inflammatory diseases of the respiratory organs". These diseases were constantly mentioned in subsequent years as the largest single killers. In 1912 there were seven deaths from typhus in Bochum, 33 from diphtheria and 56 from scarlet fever; but 243 died from tuberculosis and 406 from other respiratory diseases. Consumption was popularly - though incorrectly - believed to be particularly caused by the sharp east winds. In fact tuberculosis is caused by an inhaled or ingested organism, but, like influenza and bronchitis, is fostered by overcrowded, damp, polluted and poorly ventilated conditions.

Large sections of Bochum's population lived in such conditions.

All these diseases were general in their scope, and were not particular to certain occupational groups. In this they differed from afflictions like the worm disease which was rampant amongst the miners in the early 1900's. They demonstrate that despite the non-recurrence of epidemics on the scale of 1866 and 1871, and despite the substantial drop in the overall death rate, disease was still a serious scourge. Although not the only factor involved, the incidence of disease was frequently closely related to inadequate and overcrowded accommodation. Poor housing was not merely inconvenient: it was often dangerous.

1. ibid. 1893/4 p.35.
2. ibid. 1897/8 p.41.
3. See chapter I below.
Housing and the family

Amongst contemporaries, however, it was not always the physical and sanitary results of bad and overcrowded housing which aroused the most comment. Attention was frequently focused more on the moral evils which overcrowding brought in its train. The overcrowding and particularly the widespread custom of single people boarding with families was at times seen as threatening the very existence of the family.

The problem was in the first place that the boarding system reinforced the financial and social independence of the young. Work in the mines depended largely on physical strength, and despite the seniority system which we will describe in a later chapter (through which the highest wages were reserved to adults), fit young men could earn considerable wages while still in their teens. The custom - or compulsion - to take boarders made it easy for such youths to leave home and find lodgings elsewhere: "in the present industrial district the sons not infrequently depart their parents' home practically as soon as they have left school and get a little money in their hands", reported one local official gloomily.¹ This was regarded as undesirable since it led to a breakdown of parental control and social discipline. Another local official thought it was impossible to make parents legally responsible for the behaviour of their sons in the pits because "unfortunately most of the young miners around here do not live at home".²

¹. StAB, hh1, Amt Bochum I to KLB 24.9.1889.
². ibid, Amt Herne to KLB 25.9.1889.
The resulting moral decay threatened the state itself:

"The social democrats here /"Hofstede\"/ are almost all young, immature persons who are misled into wasting their money in bars and music halls through their high earnings and the lack of home supervision. The families of the long established workers (Stammarbeiter) and the rural families are the only ones who can provide a morally healthy new generation of industrial workers. The rising licentious generation form, however, the overwhelming majority, and are thus a danger to state order. This danger will continue to grow so long as high earnings continue and the employers continue to take on every dubious person because of the labour shortage". 1

Some employers provided hostels for single workers. In the Bochumer Verein it was obligatory for single employees to live in the company hostel if they were not at home. In most cases, however, such hostels involved fairly stringent rules, and were rejected by the young men in favour of the greater freedom and independence of boarding. One commentator reported:

"It is a well known fact that the single workers only avoid the official establishments and dormitories provided by the companies because if they used them they would be compelled to adopt punctuality and orderly behaviour. They sacrifice the higher cost of alternative lodgings to secure independence - which only too often leads to the worst moral failures. It frequently happens that half-grown youths leave their parents' home and take lodgings in the same area just because they feel their 'freedom' too limited when under their parents' eye". 2

The boarding system was thus thought to contribute to moral decay through the liberation of the young from parental control, leaving them free to indulge themselves and their passions. The host family, however, was also thought to suffer greatly. There were police regulations which

1. StAB, l79, Amt Hofstede to KLB 31.7.1900.
attempted to lay down minimum conditions for boarders: in 1879 regulations for Dortmund, Bochum, and Hagen decreed, for example, that the lodger's bedroom was not to link directly with the family's living or bedroom; there was to be at least one bed and one set of equipment for each two lodgers; mixing of the sexes in one bedroom was forbidden; there was a minimum size of room allowed per person. These regulations were improved from time to time, but it is doubtful whether they were effective. In any case it was inevitable that the host family and the boarder(s) should live in very close proximity to one another. The fears about the situation were graphically expressed by mayor Lange of Bochum:

"Very great evils have arisen, not just in this town /Bochum/ but also in the neighbouring industrial districts of Westphalia and the Rhineland, from the fact that for years the practice has existed of accepting single factory and mine workers into families who supply board and lodging in return for a modest rent. This has created a situation which from a moral view causes the greatest concern and which, if complete brutalization and degeneration is to be avoided, must be eliminated by all legally acceptable means. These single workers stay with married colleagues, usually from the same place of work. The arrangement is that they sleep in the same crowded rooms where the family lives, and either take their meals with the family for an extra payment, or buy their own food and for a small sum have it prepared by the housewife. The work at the industrial plants is organized in day and night shifts, and it has virtually become the rule that while the married worker is away from home earning for the upkeep of his often large family through the sweat of his brow, his single colleague who is receiving his board and keep is at home with the family. In these circumstances it happens that he uses the family head's absence to seduce his host's wife and young daughter and thus brings unspeakable misfortune on the family. Apart from the fact that complete demoralization must set in in such a family, children of the most tender years must themselves often witness their mother's depravity and disgrace; they will therefore themselves inevitably go astray and fall into sexual dissolution, degenerate and sooner or later

1. Lange "Wohnungsverhältnisse" pp.93-4.
2. "EM, K2 342; Miethammer and Brüggemeier "Wie wohnten Arbeiter?" p.119.
perish as far as morality is concerned. The seduced and dishonoured wife often becomes so shameless and degenerate that - as unfortunately often happens - she becomes herself the procurer for her own children and systematically seduces and formally guides into immorality and lewdness inexperienced young workers from other parts who thought they could maintain here a home away from home. The deceived husband seeks to comfort himself in drink for the loss of married faithfulness, the main fundiment of Christian marriage. He neglects his work, no longer adequately cares for his family and goes from drunkenness to loafing, dull and indifferent to his lost honour. If at first he restrains from crime through fear of punishment, he nevertheless sinks lower and lower and finally falls on public charity with his family, which has possibly grown in size as a result of his wife's adulterous life. This boarding system, which has spread wider like a contagion the more that industry has grown, has caused, apart from the ruin of many families, multifarious crimes, even assault and murder". 1

Lange may have overstated his case: it seems unlikely that boarding often led to such a catalogue of dissolution and crimes as he suggested. In many cases the boarder shared a room with his host's son of about the same age - "a custom which is certainly quite unobjectionable". 2 Nevertheless it is not surprising if many aspects of family life were under considerable strain in overcrowded conditions. 3 The moral evils of boarding were widely recognised and both boarders themselves and the host family were seen as threatened. In 1893 it was estimated that twenty per cent of all miners in the Ruhr were boarders, and the proportion does not appear to have significantly declined in later years.

1. Lange "Johmungsverhältnisse" pp.92-93.
2. WMA, K2 HKB to RPA 17.6.1907.
3. According to George Werner, chairman of the association of overmen (Steiger), there were three categories of boarding in the Ruhr: "half-board" (bed and limited food), "full-board" (bed and food) and "full-full-board" (bed, food and - for no extra payment - the housewife's favours). The latter may have been rare, but the prevalence of boarding has led one recent writer to speak of the "half-open family". Niethammer and Früggemeier "Wie Wohnten Arbeiter?" pp.118ff; Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus p.71.
The custom was "a great danger to the worker's family life".¹

**Company housing**

The shortage of good, cheap and salubrious housing posed important problems for employers as well as for workers. Labour was in demand for most of the period, and a lack of suitable accommodation was an important obstacle to recruitment. Local authorities in the Ruhr (on which the working-class voice was virtually non-existent) generally refused to contemplate undertaking building work themselves, partly because they did not see this as a proper function of local government and partly because of the cost.² The problem of a housing shortage was particularly acute in the areas outside the towns: most of the new pits were situated in what had been open country or small villages. As early as 1868 the Bochum Chamber of Commerce commented that, "the larger firms will have to go over to building workers' housing on a larger scale if they want to secure a steady and reliable work force".³ The collapse of private speculative house building in the 1870's made the need for employers to intervene directly in the housing market even more urgent:


"With the great increase in the working population which has taken place in the last years, private speculative building has not been able to satisfy the demand for workers' housing, partly because of the unprofitability of such housing in relation to its costs, and partly because of the character of our industrial conditions whereby mass redundancies are not uncommon. It will therefore have to be left chiefly to industry to meet the housing needs of an expanding number of workers". 1

Some mines found themselves faced with the necessity of building housing early. In 1864 the Hannover and Hannibal mines built their first houses because they were faced with a labour shortage. 2 The Harpener Bergbau AG found in 1870 that at their Heinrich Gustav pit they were only able to employ 720 men, although they could have used up to 1,800. The main problem was a shortage of accommodation, despite a company building programme dating from 1863. As the boom progressed, the labour shortage was felt more acutely, and in 1872 a major new building programme was decided on. 3 Some of the "colonies", as the mine-owned estates were known, were large. The Constantin colony in Hofstede, built between 1869 and 1874 had 65 houses with 123 homes and was larger than the original village. 4

Nevertheless, despite these beginnings the real growth in mine-owned housing came after the 1870's, and particularly in the decade before the outbreak of war:

1. StAB, Magistratsbericht 1882/3 p.34.
2. Festschrift zum 100 jährigen Bestehens der Zechen Hannover und Hannibal (Bochum, 1937) pp.12, 16.
3. Heinrichsbauer Harpener Bergbau AG (Essen, 1936) p.159.
Table 11  Homes owned by mines in the Ruhr.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>6,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>10,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>26,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>52,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>81,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>94,027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This expansion was to a considerable extent a reflection of the development of mining in the more northerly areas of the Ruhr where there was no industrial tradition and where the workers had to be almost all recruited from outside and brought in. The Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung commented in 1901:

"Finally, and this is the crux of the matter in the development of all mines in the underpopulated north, the achievement of such production demands a suitable work force. The mines north of the Cologne-Minden railway have almost without exception had to resort to large scale building of 'colonies' to attract the necessary workers".  

This was reflected in the spread of mine housing in the Bochum district. Even as late as 1912 some pits had almost no housing, but they were mainly to the south of the town. In the Hattingen area only one of the nine pits had more than eight percent of its workers in its own accommodation. Around Witten the highest proportion was at Neu Iserlohn III with 20 per cent of the workers living in mine housing while at some other pits the proportion was negligible; at Bruchstrasse, the flash-point of

1. Heinrichsauer Industrielle Siedlung p.113; G. Adelmann Die soziale Betriebsverfassung des Ruhrbergbaues (Bonn, 1962) pp. 163-17; Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Entwicklung des ... Steinkohlenbergbaues XII p.188; Glückauf 23.5.1914.

2. WJA, K2 213, Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung 2.h.1901.
the 1905 strike, the proportion was 1½ per cent. At the south Bochum
mines, with the exception of General in Weitmar where only three per
cent lived in mine housing, the proportion lay between 11 and 19 per
cent. All these areas were traditional mining districts, not far
from the river Ruhr itself. To the north there was one pit,
Präsidet, which had less than one per cent of its workers in mine
accommodation, but this was because the mine lay within the town
itself. All the rest had far higher proportions, ranging up to
Lothringen with 36 per cent. In the Herne district Julia had 35 per
cent of its workers in company accommodation, Recklinghausen II had
almost 16 per cent and Victor had 67 per cent. Similarly in the
Gelsenkirchen district one mine had 19 per cent, three had 32 to 35 per
cent and one (Königsgrube) had over 56 per cent; only the long
established Hibernia had virtually no housing. Even further north,
amongst the Recklinghausen pits, there were several mines where over
half the work force lived in company housing.¹ In the Ruhr as a whole
the proportion of miners living in such housing rose from under 20 per
cent in 1901 to 33 per cent in 1912 and about 37 per cent in 1914.²
Most miners and their families continued to depend on the private
housing market: but a substantial and rapidly growing minority were
thus provided for by their employer.

1. STAM, Oberbergamt Dortmund 1837.
2. Heinrichstauer Industrielle Siedlung p.111; Glückauf 23.5.1911;
Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.139. Company housing was present in
other German industrial centres: a national survey in 1898
suggested that on average around 18 dwellings had been built for
every thousand workers in plants with twenty or more workers.
Puch's Zur Wohnungfrage p.111; Schofer Formation of a modern labor
force pp. 81-91.
Company housing was not limited to the mines. Krupp in Essen was perhaps the most famous builder of housing for his workers. In the 1870's he continued to build when his financial credit was already stretched by the crisis and came to the brink of bankruptcy - a course of action only possible because of the family nature of his business.\(^1\) In Bochum the Bochumer Verein built a home for 126 single workers and another building for ten foremen and their families in the 1850's. In the following decades they established the "Stahlhausen" colony near the factory, to the west of the town. The first houses were of the "Mühlhausen" type, comprising a living room and kitchen downstairs, a bedroom upstairs, and cellar, washroom, a small garden and stall for pigs or hens. From these small beginnings the company's housing provision expanded so that by 1900 some 5,000 people lived in Stahlhausen and a further 1,000 in the boarding home for single men.\(^2\) In Gelsenkirchen the Schalker Gruben- und Hüttenverein provided housing for 628 families in 1901.\(^3\) Smaller firms too sometimes provided accommodation: in 1901 the Bochumer Eisenhütte Heintzmann und Dreyer, who employed 170 workers, had ten houses (each probably with more than one flat) providing "large, cheap homes".\(^4\) Breweries also provided housing for some of their employees: the Glückauf brewery in Ueckendorf provided it free, and in Dortmund a major demand by brewery workers in their boycott of 1905 was

1. W. Fischer \textit{Herz des Reviers} (Essen, 1965) p. 266.


3. WMA, K2 522, Schalker Gruben- und Hüttenverein to HKB 4.5.1901.

that they should not be obliged to live in the brewery. While the
provision of housing was most marked and carried furthest by the
northern mines and the large steel and engineering firms, it was there­
fore not exclusive to them and can be seen as a general characteristic
of social relations in the area. The shortage of housing, caused by
the rapid expansion of industry and intensified by the reluctance of
private builders to build on a large scale for the working class, was
being met to a very considerable, and increasing, extent by the
provision of housing by the companies themselves.

Company housing was generally of better quality and cheaper than local
private accommodation. Most mine dwellings had three or four rooms,
compared to the situation in Bochum where the bulk were of two or three
rooms. In almost all areas, indeed, the most common colony dwellings
were those with four rooms. Again, it was only a small minority that
did not have at least some garden and facilities for livestock. Rents
for mine homes were considerably lower than for comparable housing in
the neighbourhood. How much cheaper they were varied considerably,
but in the 1901 inquiry into mine housing the cost of similar housing
elsewhere was almost everywhere estimated to be at least 20 per cent
more, and sometimes up to or even above twice the price of mine housing.

1. STAH, RA I 76, Jandrat Gelsenkirchen to RPA 25.5.1901; RA I GA 493,
2. Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Entwicklung des ...Steinkohlen-
bergbaues XII pp.192-197; Westfälischer Verein Ergebnisse II pp.27-31.
3. Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Entwicklung des ...Steinkohlen-
bergbaues XII pp.192-197; R. Hundt Bergarbeiter-Johnungen im Ruhrrevier
(Berlin, 1902) pp.18-21.
The Bochumer Verein's housing was very favourably described by a delegation of visiting English workers in 1906:

"We next came to the colony of workmen's dwellings at 'Stahlhausen'... In our opinion the dwellings are quite up to the standard of workmen's requirements and in regard to some of their sanitary arrangements they are highly creditable. There is plenty of air and plenty of room. The houses stand apart and there is no overcrowding. The rent is less than what is asked in the town. In the town the average price of a flat is calculated at from 76 to 90 shillings per annum per room; whereas in the Colony it is 50/-... No comparison between the two sorts of dwellings, however, can be made as regards space and good air and general comforts. It must be remembered that the erection of these houses was commenced as long ago as 1864 when so much attention was not paid as now to the aesthetic appearance of workmen's dwellings. The majority of the houses of the Colony belong to the type known in Germany as the Mühlhausen type.... Each flat has a cellar attached to it and most of them have also a small garden, and a little shed. A special system of ventilation is here used for the closets which answers well. The Firm has set apart about forty acres of land which is let to the workmen in small allotments as kitchen-gardens for growing their vegetables and potatoes". 1

This happy picture was not always shared. Sometimes the labour needs of firms was so pressing that they cut corners in their building and put in tenants before the houses were complete. The Lothringen pit in Gerthe was reported in 1907 to be building homes in about eight weeks and bringing in tenants before the windows and footpaths were complete. The estate was deep in mud and standing water. The houses were not given time to dry out, and many of the internal walls were therefore running with damp and were even mouldy. The building inspectors turned a blind eye. The mine gave the tenants free coal and charged no rent for the first three months; the arrangement nevertheless provided them with labour for this period and saved them the expense of drying out the house themselves. 2 The Arbeitsmarkt-Korresponenz

described graphically the situation in the booming Oberhausen area:

"The number of workers there is continuously rising. Some days see the arrival on the train of hundreds of Slav workers. The sudden and enormous flood has caused a dreadful housing calamity. Hundreds live in simple barracks. The company colonies are literally packed with people. Even though building is unusually brisk the supply of housing does not remotely meet the need. The houses are scarcely plastered before they are occupied. There ought to be a legal obligation on the companies to ensure the necessary accommodation for their workers before they hire them. Packing together so many workers in barracks and scantily equipped houses is a public danger, particularly since they are foreign and from a less cultivated background. Were an epidemic to break out - the horror of the situation does not bear consideration". 1

This was an extreme situation and not typical of mine housing. By and large there seems no doubt that the quality of such accommodation was generally considerably better than private dwellings in the same price range. However, the situation does illustrate the pressure which some of the new and rapidly expanding mines were under to build homes for their workers; and it demonstrates that these homes were not invariably of the highest standards.

When firms provided housing in the Ruhr they generally aimed at more than the mere provision of accommodation for their workers. They tried hard to build not just new homes but new communities. This is demonstrated by the lay-out of most of the building. It was not done in an ad hoc manner wherever a plot of land became available; rather it was done in closed groups of houses, physically isolated from the others in the village or town. These groupings, known as "colonies", were characteristic of company housing in the Ruhr. Of 858 dwellings owned by mines in the south Bochum area in 1901, all but 65 were in colonies;

1. STAH, RA I 98, Polizei-Commissar Gelsenkirchen to RPA 31.8.1906.
in north Bochum, 691 of the 1038 mine-owned dwellings were in colonies. In the Herne area, 576 of the 1,203 mine-owned dwellings were in colonies, and in the Gelsenkirchen area the figure was no less than 1,783 out of 2,125. The proportions were lower in the older mining areas where, anyway, mine-owned housing was not increasing at the same pace: in the Hütten district only 96 of the 426 company dwellings were situated in colonies, and in the Hattingen area 108 out of 302. Many other dwellings, while not in "colonies" were in what the surveyors described as "enclosed localities" (geschlossene Ortschaften). One significant characteristic of company housing was therefore that it tended to isolate its inhabitants from the rest of the community.

This tendency was reinforced by the effects of the companies to provide other facilities in addition to housing. The Bochumer Verein ran a cooperative store with seven branches for its employees. The colony also had a kindergarten for children of three to six and a training school for girls of 14 to 17 to teach them "female handicrafts". The same pattern was found at the Krupp-owned mines Hannover and Hannibal to the north of Bochum. These mines had first built houses in the 1860's to attract labour, and they continued to expand their supply thereafter. In 1889 Hannover had three separate colonies, providing housing for 18, 76 and 22 families respectively. Each home had three to five rooms and

1. Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Entwicklung des .... Steinkohlebergbaues XII pp.192-197; Hundt Bergarbeiter Wohnungen pp.18-21; Wörke Entwicklung der Bochumer Innenstadt p.511.
2. Lange "Wohnungsverhältnisse" p.80; Gainsborough Commission Life and Labour p.28.
some garden. Hannibal had one colony of 88 homes, each with four rooms and some land.¹ By 1901 Hannover had dwellings for 381 families, and Hannibal enough for 102 families. All these homes had some garden and facilities for livestock attached. The company also financed a kindergarten run by three women, one of whom also ran the Gunningfeld colony's medical service. The number of such schools was expanded in the following years, so that by 1907 there were five schools in the various Krupp colonies, two Catholic and three Protestant. In addition there was a co-operative (company) store.²

Despite these benefits, however, the firm found that it was not attracting sufficient labour to take full advantage of the economic boom, and that this failure was being compounded by high levels of labour turnover, which in turn had bad effects on productivity. In 1905, therefore, it was decided to expand the supply of housing radically, and the building of a new colony on the Dahlhausen heath was begun in 1906. In eight years 715 homes for workers and officials were constructed. This was a model colony: the houses were not identical or set out in straight rows as in the earlier colonies. There was considerable greenery. The colony was provided with both a Catholic and a Protestant elementary school and there were two schools for very young children. For the girls

¹. BA, 20/A h5, "Geschichte der Zeche Hannover"; StAB, h12, "Ergebnisse der Untersuchung der Betriebs- und Arbeiterverhältnisse auf den Kohlengruben".

². Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Entwicklung des... Steinkohlenbergbaues XII pp.194-5; BA, 20/C 116, 117, 118, Jahresberichte of Hannover & Hannibal.
there was sewing, domestic work and cookery classes. In 1907 a branch of the Krupp library was opened in Hordel and there was also a company savings institute. Finally in December 1913 a large hall for 800 people was opened, with billiard and reading rooms, a bowling alley, and rooms for clubs, small meetings and festivities.¹

The Krupp and Bochumer Verein colonies were unusual in the extent of the social provision in their colonies. Greater resources and determination were brought to bear by these large firms than most others could contemplate. The official investigation into conditions in the Ruhr mining districts which followed the 1889 strike described the Krupp social provisions at the Hannover pit and those of the Bochumer Verein at Maria-Anna und Steinbank as "exemplary".² But these firms only carried out in a large and systematic manner a policy which was common throughout the area. The number of company houses expanded considerably, as we have already seen, and many companies provided other facilities with them. As early as 1889 a number of pits owned or ran stores for their workers, in a few instances giving credit and deducting bills from wages. Other mines - for example Vollmond, Unser Fritz and von der Heydt - bought potatoes and sometimes other food-stuffs direct at wholesalers to sell to the workers at cheap rates.³ In the 1900's almost all the major companies in and around Bochum purchased foodstuffs in bulk and

1. BA 20/A 45, "Geschichte der Zeche Hannover"; Croon "Studien" pp.105-6; BA 20/C 56a, Krupp'sche Mitteilungen 3.1.1911.
2. StAB, hh5, Denkschrift über die Untersuchung der Arbeiter- und Betriebs-verhältnisse in den Steinkohlen-Bezirken (Berlin, 1890) p.11.
3. ibid; StAB, hh2, "Ergebnisse der Untersuchung der Betriebs- und Arbeitsverhältnisse auf den Kohlengruben"; Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.361.
sold them at cost price to their workers. The less famous engineering firms provided a range of services: the Gussstahlwerk Witten provided a bath-house, a workers' restaurant and a store in addition to its houses; the Gewerkschaft Orange, a firm which only employed 140 workers at the time, was reported in 1882 to have "tried to improve the lot of its workers by the renovation of its workers' dwellings, by paving the streets of the colony and planting them with trees, by establishing an evening school and by granting free medical treatment and medicines to their wives and children".2

Gardens and allotments were very popular in the Ruhr, largely because they enabled working class families to free themselves to some extent from total dependence on the man's wages. The mining companies recognised this and were at pains to provide not only gardens, but also facilities for the keeping of animals. Goats were popular and were known as "the miner's cow". An advertisement for men distributed in East and West Prussia in 1908 by the Viktor mine (situated near Rauxel) emphasized that with every colony dwelling there was "a sizeable shed, where each person can keep his pig, his goats or his hens. So the worker does not need to purchase every pound of meat or litre of milk". Each home also had a garden, so that "everyone can grow his own vegetables,

1. WWA, K2 816.

2. WWA, HKB Jahresbericht 1882; Gussstahlwerk Witten AG, 1854-1954 (Witten, 1954) p.76.
his Kurmpst and his potatoes which he needs for the summer. Anyone who needs more land can lease it cheaply nearby. In addition the mine supplies potatoes cheaply in the winter.¹ Of the 858 mine-owned dwellings in the south Bochum district in 1901 all had facilities for keeping livestock, and 768 had gardens. In the north Bochum area the figures were respectively 958 and 937, from a total of 1,038 dwellings.²

Medical insurance was another important service which most firms offered their employees, even before it was made legally obligatory for them to do so. The miners were in any event covered by the special occupational scheme, the Knappschaft. This institution covered all the pits in the area, so that when a man moved from one to another he did not lose his insurance cover. This may have been one factor encouraging miners to move from one job to another. Non-miners were generally covered by company schemes, particularly those who worked for large firms, and contributions were usually lost if the man left the firm. In 1901 seven Bochum firms ran their own health insurance schemes.³ Only the worker himself, however, was covered by compulsory insurance: the legislation did not extend to his family. Some firms therefore started on their own initiative to extend cover to dependents. The Hibernia mine introduced free medical treatment for miners' families in 1897,

¹. Fischer-Eckert Lage der Frauen p.59.
³. Seippel Bochum Einst und Jetzt p.191; Crew Industry and Community p.175; IZF, Volksblatt 7.1.1900.
and the following year the Harpener Bergbau AG could report that "free medical treatment has been introduced at all the company's mines for members of workers' and officials' families".¹

The provision of company housing was therefore part of a wider system of social provision for their workers by the firms in the Ruhr area. The benefits - known collectively as "Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen" - were usually a source of great pride to the companies providing them. Not untypical was the picture of Louis Baare painted in a document drawn up - probably within the Rochumer Verein - for the Deutscher Handeltag in 1910:

"He demonstrated his concern for good relations between employer and worker in his capacity of manager through a warm concern for his employees. Baare established a beautiful and lasting memorial to his activity in the workers' colony of Stahlhausen with its pleasant houses, shady alleys, gardens, playgrounds and creche. He created a very beneficial institution in the comfortable home for single workers. He cared for the workers' well-being through numerous relief funds and other socially beneficial arrangements, the last one being on his retirement as general director when he donated a large capital sum, the interest on which was to be used to support needy wives and widows of employees. That the workers felt satisfied under his directorship is demonstrated by the fact that over 300 of the firm's employees have been over 25 years in its service". ²

Similarly, the Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG, on the fortieth anniversary of its foundation, described as the chief example of its social policy the provision of housing, "which has aimed not just at providing the necessary accommodation for the necessary manpower, but above all at creating healthy and cosy homes ... All these institutions demonstrate

1. 25 Jahre Bergwerksgesellschaft Hibernia (Düsseldorf, 1898) p.76; Glückauf 29.10.1898.
2. WIA, K2 92.
that the Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG has remembered the social obligations which have been brought to the consciousness of our age more than ever before".¹ There is no doubt that the housing and other social provisions were of considerable benefit to many workers; company housing, because of its quality and cheapness was often in considerable demand and the other benefits were also of clear and tangible advantage to the beneficiaries.

Notwithstanding such considerations, the provisions were of considerable advantage to the companies as well as the workers. The official Government mining journal noted that, "in the majority of cases the employer who institutes Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen serves not only the wellbeing of his workers but also - consciously or unconsciously - his own interest."² This was very clear in areas where without company housing the pits simply would not have been able to recruit sufficient labour. In such situations the cost of building the houses and charging rents below the market rate were subsumed by the expanded production which only an increased work force allowed. Most firms and mines were not faced with creating an entirely new labour force in this way; but they were confronted with a substantial problem in keeping the workers that they had. Labour turnover was a constant problem for employers throughout this period. It was a serious restriction on productivity, and it tended to encourage a general bidding up of wages as employers

². Zeitschrift für das Berg-, Hütten- und Salinenwesen 1906 p. 3.
competed with each other for labour. Company housing and other benefits could help in this situation. Fritz Baare (the son and successor of Louis) explained at the Bochumer Verein's 1898 AGM the important role of housing in creating a settled and contented work force and the advantage which this gave in the competition for labour:

"It is clear that because of the generally increased activity in the foundries and the mining industry there have been temporary shortages of able workers. This was felt here less than elsewhere. I believe that I can explain this through the fact that we are in the happy position of being able to offer a large part of our work force good, healthy, and cheap accommodation - for the single worker in our lodging house which is recognised for its excellent installations, and for the married in suitably built family homes. That our efforts for the benefit of our work force have fallen on good soil is probably best demonstrated by the fact that at present the number of officials, foremen and workers who have belonged to our concern for over 25 uninterrupted years has risen to about 700". 2

He took up the theme again the following year:

"The shortage of capable labour which I mentioned last year has become more serious with the increased activity of the foundry and mining industries. If nonetheless in our concern, the cast steel works, the turnover of workers has only moderately increased on last year, this confirms my statement of last year that this is primarily to be attributed to our good institutions for married and single workers. This year too we have established a number of new family dwellings in the well understood interest of the worker and of our company, and it is our intention to continue to give this important question our particular attention. We can attribute our good and well ordered relationships to the fact that we could work without important interruptions in all departments and meet our commitments, although this was not easy with the heavy claims on our work shops and the strong demand for our products". 3

The number of workers who had stayed with the firm for 25 or even more years was a favourite index of the success of companies' social policies.


2. STAM, RA I GA 355. In 1898 the company employed 9,221 men in the metal works and 3,221 in the mines.

3. STAM, RA I GA 336.
Such men were the heroes of company festivities at which their praises were sung and the other workers were encouraged to emulate their loyalty and years of hard work for the company. The Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG listed its social spending in its own 25-year anniversary publication and commented:

"The company can partly attribute to these institutions the fact that a substantial number of its officials and workers have already celebrated or are celebrating their 25 year anniversary of activity at the company's mines. This will be a good omen for the continued growth, blossoming and prosperity of the firm, which now enters its 26th year in the old miner's calling". 1

The costs, on the other hand, were not necessarily high, despite the initial capital expenditure. In 1888 the Bochumer Verein board decided to embark on a new house-building programme, "in consideration of the fact that the rents for workers' accommodation are considerably more expensive in the town than in Stahlhausen, that there is a constant and very high demand for them, and finally that the Stahlhausen houses, which are better and healthier than the average of the town, are profitable in spite of the low rents..." 2

There is no doubt that company housing did greatly reduce the willingness of workers to leave their job and seek work elsewhere. Company housing was always given strictly on condition that the tenant worked for the firm or pit concerned. To leave his job, therefore, meant also leaving his home, and while such a course was possible it was not to be undertaken lightly. There is evidence that colony dwellers were far less mobile

2. KA, 129 00 Verwaltungsrathssitzung 16.2.1888.
than workers at the same mines living in private accommodation:

Table 12  Labour turnover at Bochum mines, 1900.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mine</th>
<th>Turnover of all workers (per cent)</th>
<th>Turnover of colony dwellers (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(South Bochum)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dannenbaum</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prinz Regent</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prinz v. Preussen</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinrich Gustav</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vollmond</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friederica</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(North Bochum)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantin</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannibal</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolinenglück</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannover</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lothringen</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference between the turnover rates for all workers and those for colony dwellers only is very marked and demonstrates the efficacy of mine housing as a means of reducing job changing. The turnover rate amongst colony dwellers does seem to have increased in the later years of the decade, reaching 25 to 30 per cent in 1908-10, but even at this level it remained considerably below the turnover rate for all miners.²

1. Hundt Bergarbeiter Wohnungen pp.34-5. "Turnover" is quantified by adding the departing to the hired workers.

The economic advantages of a reduced labour turnover were recognized, if not readily quantifiable. A settled and loyal group of workers was clearly more productive than one which was constantly changing. The Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG's first annual report commented:

"The increase in our workers' housing, particularly through the establishment of the Ottiliene colony, plays a vital role. The expansion of our work force through settled workers and the resulting considerable increase in productivity is mostly a result of this. This factor, as well as the increase and improvement of our other building investments, will in future be of increasing benefit to production". 1

It is not possible to quantify the productivity loss through job changing since there were other factors which also affected output, but it took some time for a worker new to a pit to adjust fully to the new conditions and achieve his full potential. This was particularly important when - as was often the case in the Ruhr - there were wide variations in such crucial factors as the hardness of the seams from one pit to another.

Writing in the 1930's, however, one writer observed, "Before the war every new miner's house was reckoned to be worth an increased production of 450 tons". 2 The mines inspector Robert Hundt commented in 1902:

"The provision of good housing for the workers is the best and only means in the Ruhr coal mining district for making the workers settled and of limiting the extremely strong labour turnover. The low interest on the capital outlay is only illusory. In reality the higher productivity of a settled work force which understands the character of the seams will soon more than compensate for the lack of interest on capital. The building of good housing is thus as much to the economic advantage of the employer as to that of the workers". 3

1. Quoted in Zum Feier des 25-jährigen Bestehens der GBAG.


3. Hundt Bergarbeiter Wohnungen p.39. The scope for pure altruism was limited since only a small minority of companies (of which Krupp was one) were owned by an individual or family; almost all managers had to answer to shareholders. Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.198.
Most employers probably did not ultimately distinguish between self
interest and a responsible concern for their employees' well-being.

Men like Alfred Krupp and Louis Baare were not mean-minded or overtly
calculating in their social provisions. The provision of benefits for
their workers helped many employers to legitimate their wealth and power
in their own eyes and in those of their contemporaries. They would not
have rejected the title "paternalist" since they saw the firm very much
as a kind of extended family. All worked for the common good, each
according to his ability and station. It was the duty of the more
fortunate to care for their more lowly brethren; but equally it was the
duty of the head of the "family" to ensure that the overall good took
precedence over any ill-conceived short-term aspirations from the junior
members. No challenge to their stewardship was to be tolerated, but so
long as everyone willingly accepted his place within the hierarchy they
were genuinely munificent. The notion of the firm as a family reached
its apogee in the periodic company anniversary celebrations. At these
those who had dedicated long years to the company were honoured and held
up as examples to the other workers. The twin notions of life-long
commitment to the firm and the firm's duty to care for its employees
were expressed by Engineer Capelle at the Bochumer Verein's 1891
anniversary celebrations:

"It is frequently asserted that in modern industrial works the old
dependence and the former good and to some extent patriarchal
relationship between employer and employee has been lost. In some
places this may be true. But the large number of men celebrating
their jubilee with us proves that this is not the case with the
Bochumer Verein. Here the initiative of the general director and
the willingness of the board to provide the means have created a
profusion of Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen which I do not need to
enumerate since they are known to all of us. We cannot better
express our thanks for everything which has been done for us in
this way in the past and particularly today than to make a solemn
vow to stay true in future to the flag around which we gathered 25
years ago or more. We wish to do our duty and fulfil our obligations until a higher Power orders: 'Now is the time for rest'.

The provision of housing and other social facilities was an expression of duty, a natural responsibility of those at the top of the community to those below them. It was a tangible means towards achieving the harmony of a deeply hierarchic society, the creation of what has been described as a "moral community". It was an approach and a conception of social obligation on the part of the bourgeois leaders of society very reminiscent of the role of the aristocracy in a more traditional setting.

Nevertheless, our concern here is not primarily with the reasons or the psychological justifications for the firms' policies, but with their social effects and particularly their impact on the formation of the new working class. There were several important effects. In the first place, social provision by the firms did give tangible expression to the firm as a community of interest. Many workers were provided by their employer with homes and other facilities the like of which they had never before enjoyed, and had little likelihood of finding elsewhere. Loyalty and good service clearly did pay dividends. Although company propaganda doubtless greatly exaggerated it, there is no reason to doubt that many workers were effectively encouraged to see their real support in their firm, and to have their hopes and aspirations concentrated primarily on it. The appeal of class, as against company, was thus appreciably dimmed.


The provision of company housing, particularly in the form of colonies, had the further important consequence of helping to preserve and consolidate divisions amongst the workers. The status of those who lived in the colonies seems to have differed between the large engineering firms such as the Bochumer Verein or Krupp on the one hand, where to be accepted by the firm as a permanent employee and given a company home was a sign of skill and standing, and the mines on the other, where the colonies were frequently held to be socially inferior. This was partly because most mine workers were relatively unskilled anyway, but also because the pit colonies were to a great extent inhabited by recent immigrants, in later years particularly immigrants from the east. Many such people were forced to rely on company housing, having no other connections in the area through whom to find alternative accommodation. The result was that some colonies were full of immigrants, who, because of the physical and social isolation of the colonies, had relatively little contact with other workers. One contemporary observer reported the social isolation of a Hamborn colony, particularly as it affected the children:

"In the schools the children of officials, prosperous artisans and workers sit together in a healthy mix and learn from one another. But whereas in the private dwellings this co-existence continues at play, in the colonies the workers' children only have each other's company in their free time. There is a complete lack of mutual influence with other social classes. One mother of seven, whose friendly, clean household I admired with delight, complained to me: 'It is good to live here; in the town we would get nothing with seven children. But the colony is still the colony, and for the children it is worthless. They neither see nor hear anything better, and the bad example makes them forget all my exhortations'." 1

1. Fischer-Eckert Lage der Frauen pp.35-36.
This social isolation could be reassuring to some, particularly those new to industrial society. The advertisement for workers put out in East and West Prussia in 1908 by the Viktor pit, to which we have already alluded, specifically sought to reassure potential (Masurian) immigrants that they would not need to mix with non-Masurians:

"Masurians! The mine seeks honest, decent families for this quite new colony. If possible the colony will be inhabited only with Masurian families, so they may live entirely amongst each other and need have nothing to do with Poles, East Prussians etc. Everyone can think that he was in his Masurian homeland. There are Masurians who have already worked at the mine for a long time and feel content with the decent treatment they have received. Such a worker will soon appear in Masuria as a witness to this". 1

This picture was not too far removed from the reality of at least some colonies. The Frankfurter Zeitung's correspondent described the position of the Polish colonies in 1902:

"From the Polish immigrants at least sixty per cent are in the colonies and have no steady communication with the natives. In my neighbourhood there are great colonies with several hundred households. If anyone wants convincing, let him go there: he would imagine he was in 'Greater Poland'. Not only the adults but also the children speak Polish. These extensive company colonies are thus Polish enclaves on German soil. The pit management are naturally perfectly aware of this development, but do nothing to alleviate it in 'alldutsche' spirit..." 2

The gap between the immigrant colonies and other workers was in turn reinforced by the contempt with which the immigrants - particularly taken en masse in colonies - were often regarded. The Germans often found their manners rough and their homes squalid. Colonies with a preponderant Polish element were known as "Polack colonies". One German from Datteln ("Steinfeld") told a later researcher:

1. Fischer-Eckert Lage der Frauen p.61.
"The pits needed men. So all sorts of riff-raff came who could not find work elsewhere, the 'dryers' who only lived in the new houses until they were dried out, many Italians, Croats and Poles. When the Poles arrived they were still servile and kissed one's shoes. But when they had had three pay days that was all over; then they became brazen. There was disorder and quarrelling in these new houses. What did they have? They got beds from the mine and then some boards and crates, that was all. On pay days there were regular punch-ups".  

The inhabitants of such colonies were popularly referred to as the "rabble" (Pack).  

The colonies thus contributed considerably to the preservation in the new industrial environment of the existing ethnic and regional differences between workers, a further factor considerably reducing the strength of appeals to the common interests binding all workers in the area together. This naturally helped the employers to preserve their authority from serious challenge. The colonies were also of more direct assistance to them in this. Residents were subject to often strict rules and were more generally exposed to the power of the employer. Thus the "House Rules" of the Bochumer Verein's home for single workers decreed that, "Every inhabitant must obey unconditionally the directions of the administrator and the supervisor", and then proceeded to lay down detailed rules about what was and what was not allowed. Some laid down elementary and common sense practices of good social behaviour, although with what appears now as a rather heavy handed rigidity: if a fire broke out anywhere on the firm's premises the men had to help put it out, on pain of a fine if they slipped out of their obligation; they were not to lie on

2. G. Kliss Wanderung der Ostpreussens p.22. Even Dr. Pieper, a defender of the Poles, agreed that the Silesian and Bohemian miners "are generally on a lower level of living". Pieper Iage der Bergarbeiter p.215.
or in bed with dirty clothing, and smoking in bed was forbidden; drunken­ness and fighting was not to be tolerated. Other rules appear more restrictive: visitors were only allowed with the administrator's permission; the men could not visit each other's rooms; they had to attend lunch....¹ These restrictions were not welcomed by many of the young men. The Gainsborough Commission commented that, "it is true that many of the men do not like the clause in their contract compelling them to lodge and board with the firm; but it is impossible to contest the advantages that accrue to them from the system".² Most colonies had at least some similar rules, aiming at the suppression of uncleanliness and drunkenness and other behaviour which was regarded as anti-social and to which the raw immigrant was sometimes felt to be particularly susceptible. Robert Hundt thought the colonies were particularly useful for preserving law and order and acclimatizing newcomers to the industrial (and German) environment:

"The settlement of workers in colonies has at least the advantage - not to be underestimated - over the building of scattered housing that it makes the maintenance of order and adequate cleanliness easier. All mines which own a large number of workers' houses have appointed administrators who are only concerned with the control of workers' dwellings".³

Influential though rules and colony managers may have been in enforcing new and not always welcome rules and codes of conduct on newcomers to the industrial environment, the really vital power which the existence

of the colonies gave to the companies stemmed from the link they created between a man's home and his job. These homes were only let on condition that the tenant - and frequently his able-bodied sons and lodgers - worked for the employer involved. The lease agreements often made this explicit. Thus the Bergbau-Gesellschaft Neu Essen included the following paragraphs in its agreements with tenants:

1. Voluntary 1½ days notice is reserved to both sides, to be implemented at the end of the calendar month and given at the latest on the 15th of the month.

If the tenant leaves his employment at the owner's works after legal notice the lease agreement expires with the ending of employment without the necessity of any special notice on the part of the owner. If the tenant is given notice by the company management, notice of the lease agreement is implicitly contained in it, and the dwelling is to be evacuated on the expiry of 1½ days notice. The dwelling is to be handed over completely cleaned.

5. If the tenant does not evacuate the dwelling at the correct time, the mine administration has the right to remove him from the dwelling, without legal and other formalities, and without liability for damages of any sort, particularly for those to furniture taken out of the dwelling.

11. Sub-letting is only allowed with the permission of the owner; lodgers are allowed, but only when they are employed at the owner's works. A lodger must be immediately removed if he behaves in an unseemly manner. He must also leave the dwelling on the day of his last shift at the owner's works.

12. The tenant is obliged to let his sons, so long as they do not select another career, take up employment at the owner's works from their completed fourteenth year.

Paragraph 1½ listed circumstances where the owner could regard the contract as broken and call for immediate evacuation of the dwelling. It included:

"1½a) If the tenant arbitrarily gives up work at the owner's mine without fulfilling the legal requirement for notice".

The lease agreement at the Helene und Amalia mine in the Essen area

1. STAB, Oberbergamt Dortmund 1837.
included broadly the same provisions:

"2. The sub-letting of the entire dwelling or individual parts of it is not allowed. The tenant may take as lodgers only workers at the Helene und Amalia mine.

8. In case of unpunctual payment of rent or non-fulfilment of the other obligations on the tenant, or in case of disruption of the peace and order of the house, or in case of incompatibility between the tenant or one of his household with the other inhabitants of the house and neighbours, or if the employment relationship between the tenant and the owner is terminated, whether through notice from one side or the other or for other reasons, the owner is entitled to suspend the present agreement at any time without notice and to demand the immediate evacuation of the dwelling". 1

With such a lease the worker's home was effectively tied to his job. If - for any reason - he made himself unpopular with management and lost his job he had no more than a couple of weeks before he was liable to lose his home too. If he were to stop work without giving the obligatory two weeks notice - and most strikes fell into this category - he could be required to leave his home immediately. We shall see when we look at strikes that this was a power which employers were sometimes willing to invoke. However, perhaps more important than the cases where men were actually thrown out of their homes was the general vulnerability of large numbers of workers to their employers, a vulnerability which exerted its influence at all times, not just when the power was actually invoked. The miners' union paper described company housing as "the worker's chains, which bind him to the employer":

"For the inhabitants of such dwellings, which are in fact relatively cheap, this advantage is lost twice over through the dependence in which he is placed. He allows a small reduction of wages to take place without protest, simply with the thought that the advantage of a better wage he might obtain elsewhere will be lost through the higher rent he would have to pay there. He will usually submit to the most unworthy treatment, in the knowledge that otherwise he may be ejected from his cheap home, and that any dismissal involves the danger of suddenly finding himself on the pavement". 2

1. ibid.

2. IZF, Deutsche Berg- und Hüttenartefier Zeitung 2.7.1898.
The growth of company housing, particularly in the form of closed colonies, thus weakened and hindered the growth of working class consciousness and solidarity. In its place it helped to foster the development of a "company consciousness". Workers in them were isolated not only from other social classes, but also from other workers. This helped to reinforce the ethnic and linguistic differences, particularly when the inhabitants of a colony all or predominantly came from the same home district. Such immigrants had little need or incentive to integrate with or even get to know native workers. At the same time their dependence on the employer was only too apparent. Sometimes employers went to some lengths to make the company a focus of real and deep loyalty by providing benefits and advantages for their workers. In other cases fear of losing home and job was perhaps a more potent force than active loyalty to the employer. In either case, however, the worker was encouraged to think primarily in terms of his company and employer and not in terms of his co-workers as an effective focus for his hopes and aspirations.

Conclusion

We have seen that the conditions which the thousands of immigrants and their families met when they arrived in the Ruhr were less than satisfactory. There was a serious shortage of housing, particularly aggravated by the collapse of private building for the poorer classes after the slump of the 1870's. The result was that private housing for workers was expensive and overcrowded. It frequently lacked elementary sanitation and was unhealthy. The increasingly popular solution was a very considerable expansion of company housing, typically in the form of
colonies. The only other obvious solution, the development of municipal housing, does not appear to have been given serious considera-
tion, largely because town councils were dominated by employers.¹ The preferred solution, however, had important effects on the social relations of the area. Workers were made dependent on their employer for their homes, and through the construction of largely self-contained colonies were largely isolated from other workers. This facilitated the attempts of employers not only to reduce job changing and competitive wage bidding, but also to encourage their workers to see the company as their prime focus of loyalty. By the same token it made the development of class consciousness amongst the new working class more difficult.
The effect of the solution found to the housing problem was thus to accentuate the divisions amongst workers and strengthen the power of the employers.

¹ Crew Industry and Community pp.190, 258; Kirchhoff Sozialpolitik p.126.
CHAPTER 3: RELIGION

We have seen that the working class in the Ruhr at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries was a largely new and a rapidly growing creation; but that the conditions under which it grew were not very conducive to the development of solidarity and class unity. We have noted particularly ethnic and linguistic divisions, the high geographical mobility of large numbers of workers and the divisions caused by company housing. But perhaps the greatest impediment to the emergence of a united working class movement, particularly one with a socialist orientation, was the role of religion in the Ruhr.

Miners in the Ruhr in the nineteenth century had a strong sense of their vulnerability to imminent danger and of the importance of religion. Shifts traditionally started with a prayer or hymn - a practice which in some places continued up to the Second World War. Work on Sundays and holy days was very exceptional until the technical developments of the mid-nineteenth century made it essential.¹ Church attendance was general: in the 1880's the Friedenskirche in Schalke was sometimes unable to take all the worshippers. Over the next decades, Church attendance appears to have declined, amongst both the upper classes of society and also amongst workers.² Nevertheless, religion continued to exert a significant appeal to many workers. Otto Hue - himself a socialist - observed in the 1890's:

¹. Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.96-7, 127.
"Very few miners are complete atheists. Many claim to be, but if one looks more closely one discovers that the apparent denier of God is an unconscious pantheist who sees God in every expression of nature... The average miner is deeply religious, even when - as is very common - he attends no Church. And the man who disputes God out of existence lets him in again through the back door. The collier does not, however, generally dispute about abstract matters; he is taciturn, a result of his long work in the lonely depths". 1

Many workers in the Ruhr had arrived directly from rural backgrounds where the priest or minister still wielded his traditional authority.

And it is very likely that many wives continued to maintain their faith and attend Church even after their husbands had ceased to do so.

The Ruhr was traditionally a place of mixed denominations, predominantly Catholic in the west, in towns such as Duisburg and Essen which were near the Catholic centres of the Rhineland, and mainly Protestant in the east, around Dortmund. Bochum, situated between Essen and Dortmund, was fairly evenly balanced. In the Altstadt there was a permanent Catholic majority: 53 per cent of the total population in 1890, 61 per cent in 1871 and 52 per cent in 1900.2 Table 13 gives the denominational breakdown of the Altstadt in 1900:

Table 13 Denominational breakdown, Bochum Altstadt 1900.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>31,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>29,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Dissidenten&quot;</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Catholics</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. StAB, Magistrats Bericht 1871; WMA, K2 359.
3. Seippel Bochum Einst und Jetzt p.51. These figures do not match exactly those for 1900 given above, but the difference is marginal.
Catholicism was stronger amongst workers than amongst the population at large. In 1907 67 per cent of the total population of the town of Bochum (taking the enlarged 1904 boundaries) were Catholic, but amongst the workers the proportion was 51 per cent.\(^1\) The proportion varied from one industry to another:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Catholics as a proportion of workers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood industry</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foodstuffs</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone &amp; earth</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostelries</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal production</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus in all the major industries apart from metals, around half or more of the workers were Catholics.

The denominational groups were not spread evenly geographically. Table 15 shows the proportions of the total population who were Catholic in the various Gemeinde\(\text{a} in and around Bochum in 1871 and 1912:

Table 15: Catholics in town and Landkreis Bochum, 1871 and 1912.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Population 1871</th>
<th>Catholics 1871</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Population 1912</th>
<th>Catholics 1912</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altstadt</td>
<td>21,193</td>
<td>12,964</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>74,970</td>
<td>39,564</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grumme</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>6,582</td>
<td>3,893</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hofstede</td>
<td>1,928</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>9,835</td>
<td>4,657</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamme</td>
<td>2,656</td>
<td>1,464</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23,330</td>
<td>10,643</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiemelhausen</td>
<td>2,266</td>
<td>1,014</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25,690</td>
<td>13,078</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town - total</td>
<td>28,828</td>
<td>17,211</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>110,407</td>
<td>71,835</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Population 1871</th>
<th>Catholics 1871</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Population 1912</th>
<th>Catholics 1912</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riemke</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>7,634</td>
<td>1,631</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somborn</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3,066</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altenbochum</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9,792</td>
<td>1,868</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weitmar</td>
<td>3,161</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22,711</td>
<td>10,344</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hordel</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8,268</td>
<td>1,135</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werne</td>
<td>2,591</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17,808</td>
<td>5,926</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langendreer</td>
<td>1,842</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27,052</td>
<td>7,754</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerthe &amp; Hiltrop</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9,087</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laer</td>
<td>1,696</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6,880</td>
<td>1,721</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Querenberg</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2,407</td>
<td>1,126</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergen</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27,052</td>
<td>7,454</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockum &amp; Düren</td>
<td>1,303</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3,922</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harpen</td>
<td>1,338</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5,133</td>
<td>1,564</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landkreis - total</td>
<td>120,740</td>
<td>5,371</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>150,812</td>
<td>53,947</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the Catholics declined slightly as a proportion of the population - from 66 per cent of the total town and Landkreis in 1871 to 53 per cent in 1912. Immigration from Catholic areas such as Prussian Poland was

1. Croon "Studien" p.95; StAB, Magistrats Bericht 1871; F. Knipping Zur Bochumer Eingemeindungsfrage (Bochum, 1917) Anlage 1; WWA, K2 359.
offset by Protestant immigrants.\textsuperscript{1} The greatest change over the fifty years 1871 to 1912 was that the denominations had become more mixed: in 1871 there were three Gemeinde\textsuperscript{2} where Catholics comprised over sixty per cent of the population and eight where they were less than a quarter; by 1912 the number of such Gemeinde\textsuperscript{2} was down to one and two respectively. Almost all the Gemeinde\textsuperscript{2} by 1912, had a denominational mix similar to that of the area as a whole.

This does not mean, however, that sectarian barriers were necessarily dissolving. Many Gemeinde\textsuperscript{2} by 1912 had large populations, and the overall figures may have concealed more localized sectional divisions. One inhabitant of Witten, a predominantly Protestant town, recalled the survival of a distinct Catholic ("black") area there even in the 1920's:

"The intolerant but generally popular description of the area from Kronen- and Kesselstrasse to Crengeldanzstrasse, and beyond to the Marienstrasse and the beginning of the Ardezstrasse, as the 'black village' (Negerdorf) - because of the dominant 'black' voters there - was quite current during my school years in the 1920's, and was now and then a willingly utilized reason to provoke strong disputes even amongst grammar school students". 2

Otto Hue also recalled his childhood in Hörde, near Dortmund, in the 1870's and 1880's:

"Sectarian hatred is so profoundly imparted to school children that as a school kid I was involved in the most murderous fights with the 'blacks'. Later I and many of these 'blacks' worked together at the foundry with a perfectly friendly spirit, and we looked back with bitter scorn at the time when fanatical self-interested politics had incited us youngsters against each other". 3

\textsuperscript{1} Those arriving in Bochum from Ostareussen in the years 1895-1900 came mainly from south of the line Goldap-Elbing, i.e. from the Protestant Pasurian district. Kliss Wanderung der Ostareussen pp.14-15.

\textsuperscript{2} W. Nettmann Miitten in den Reichstagswahlen des Deutschen Reiches 1871-1918 (Miitten, 1972) p.104. In Langendreer the predominantly Catholic area around the station was known as the "Catholic station"; Croon "Studien" p.102.

\textsuperscript{3} Hue Neutrale oder parteiische Gewerkschaften? p.111.
Intermarriage between Catholic and Protestants was exceptional.¹

Sectarian divisions were reinforced by the school system which was completely denominational. In 1886 and 1896 there were six Catholic and six Protestant primary schools (Volksschulen) in Bochum: apart from one Catholic pupil at a Protestant school in 1896, none had any children from the other creed. Ten years later each denomination had nineteen schools, but there were still no Protestants in the Catholic schools and only three Catholics in the Protestant ones.² Hospitals, old-people's homes and orphanages were also sectarian in character. Although the Churches may have been active in the field of poor relief, denominational divisions in this field were not as marked in Bochum as they may have been elsewhere in the Ruhr.³

Overt hostility and conflict between Catholics and Protestants was relatively infrequent. Even the Kulturkampf of the 1870's does not appear to have produced open conflict between communities, although it no doubt hardened suspicions.⁴ In Weitmar (where 45 per cent of the population were Catholic) there is some evidence that housing patterns were becoming more rather than less integrated in the years before the war:


3. The main poor relief was organized by the local authorities; in addition there was in Bochum a middle class voluntary association, the Verein zur Peseitung der Strassen- und Hausbettelei; in Hamborn, by contrast, private charitable work of this kind was entirely in the hands of confessional bodies: StAB, HKB Jahresberichte; Crew Industry and Community p.163; Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus p.91.

in 1909 73 per cent of the Catholic population of Weitmar lived in streets where between thirty and sixty per cent of the inhabitants were Catholic, and by 1913 the proportion had risen to 80 per cent of the Catholics. The great and growing majority of Catholics thus lived in relatively "integrated" streets.

Social conflicts were not always between denominational groups as such: sometimes the main division was between immigrants and "natives". At Datteln ("Steinfeld") the stream between the old village and the new colony where the immigrants were housed formed a frontier where the boys from the two communities, both of which contained Catholics and Protestants, fought each other. For many, however, religious loyalty was synonymous with their sense of community, so that the need to recreate communities in the new and sometimes hostile industrial environment could maintain and even strengthen traditional denominational divisions. Thus social suspicion and conflict carried religious overtones and were sometimes expressed in denominational terms. In Langendreer, a traditionally Protestant village, the hundreds of Catholic immigrants in the prewar years were almost all propertless workers; this created friction with the Protestant craftsmen, shop-keepers and businessmen who dominated local life and paid local taxes, and who saw little reason to provide funds for Catholic religious and social needs.

1. "IA, K2 359.
3. Croon "Studien" p. 89.
The identification between denominational and community feeling created problems within as well as between the Churches. Immigrants, particularly those who had come long distances from a quite different social environment, saw the maintenance of their religion as a central element in their attempt to preserve their distinct language, customs and sense of community in the new and strange setting. Protestant Masurians and Catholic Poles did not feel at home in the established German Churches they found in the Ruhr. Indeed, to the embarrassment of the Churches, they insisted on having their own ministers and priests. In the 1890's a Masurian minister travelled around the Masurian groups in the Ruhr, and in 1887 and 1891 special Masurian ministries were established in Gelsenkirchen and Bochum. Nevertheless, the provision of such ministries does not appear to have been adequate to meet the needs of all Masurians in the district: in Langendreer the lack of sympathy and understanding which Masurians met in the Protestant Church was said to have contributed to a general weakening of their religious loyalties, particularly in the second generation. The Poles, with their greater numbers and their sense of distinctive nationhood, were even more insistent on special provision within the Catholic Church. The first Polish priests appeared in the Ruhr in the late 1880's and early 1890's. Despite the insistence by Dr. Franz Liss, the most prominent of them, that "a good Pole is a good Catholic", their activities contributed powerfully to the emergence in the Ruhr of a distinct Polish subculture with strong nationalist overtones. The Church authorities, embarrassed by these activities,

2. Croon "Studien" p.103.
clamped down and in 1894 Dr. Liss returned to the east. The Church continued to provide some Polish-speaking priests, but demands for an exclusively Polish ministry continued and led to conflict between nationalists and the Church hierarchy which lasted for a number of years. In Baukau, for instance, a "Polish Committee to Obtain Better Spiritual Care" was established: at a meeting in January 1908 "the bishops and priests were generally very sharply criticized because they did not want to fulfil the justified demands of the Poles" and it was decided to write to the local priest and urge him to approach the bishop. In the final years before the war the Church acceded to more of the demands: the number of Polish-speaking priests in the area was increased and Polish became a compulsory foreign language at the Paderborn seminary.¹

The denominational complexion of the Ruhr was thus complex and changing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Numerically, the area was fairly well balanced between Protestants and Catholics, although the balance tilted from a Catholic predominance in the west to a Protestant predominance in the east. Although overt hostility between the two denominations was generally limited, the denominational division constituted a deep cleft within the emerging working class. And even

¹. Wehler "Polen im Ruhrgebiet" pp.145-151; StAB, Westfälische Allgemeine Zeitung 26.5.1972; StAB, h6h, Polizei Baukau to KLB 6.1.1908. A similar nationality problem within the Catholic Church occurred in nineteenth century America. One observer there noted: "I have never had reason to believe that the mass of Irish are attached to the Roman Catholic religion as a matter of faith. It is a matter of national pride, and of the gallantry of those who lived where it has been persecuted. A Catholic congregation here, under the charge of an English or French priest, is almost always restless. They want an Irish priest, for their interest in their faith is, that it was their faith in their oppressed home". Quoted in T. Coleman Passage to America (paperback edition, London, 1974) pp.204-205.
within the main denominations themselves important ethnic and language divisions appeared.

Industrialization and its associated social changes and the vast movements of people which accompanied it posed serious new challenges to the Churches themselves. In positive terms: how were they to adapt their teaching and their methods to the human concerns and aspirations of a new social situation? In negative terms: how were they to defend themselves and their followers from the new dangers which surrounded them in the increasingly urban and industrial setting - from the dangers of atheism, indifference and the rival appeals of socialism and ultramontanism or liberalism? In concrete terms the challenge in areas such as the Ruhr was for the Churches to build and maintain an appeal to the industrial workers who now dominated the district.

Social Catholicism

The Catholics were the first to develop a distinctive progressive and socially-orientated interpretation of their creed. Bishop Ketteler of Mainz, the main spokesman of "social Catholicism" in Germany, wrote in the 1860's: "Efforts to improve the wretched conditions which the principles of the modern economic system have imposed on the workers.... are certainly not in contradiction to the spirit of Christianity, but to the contrary are in complete accordace with it". It was a view which could easily attract sympathy from Catholics in the Ruhr, where large numbers of Catholic workers had their lives dominated by generally

Protestant employers. Many Catholics there were ready and willing to campaign as hard as they could to defend the interests of the workers against what they saw as rapacious and often un-Christian employers.

The Church and the lay Catholic establishment in Germany, adopted a cautious approach towards "social Catholicism" and its more radical exponents. The need to improve the conditions of workers was broadly accepted. But, at least for the Church, this was a secondary aim: defence of the faith came first. Thus the Prussian bishops in their pastoral letter of 23 August 1890 conceded the need for (potentially radical) workers' clubs, but cautioned:

"These clubs must be truly Christian....They must all have religion, sincere and living Christianity, as their basis and religious morality as their rule. Where this is lacking clubs will not only be unfruitful and decay, but will easily degenerate and make the evil worse. It is therefore better to begin with a small number of truly religious members and gradually to expand than to introduce the germ of corruption into the club through some kind of indulgence towards the secular spirit with the aim of size". 1

The Church's most significant statement on the social question came the following year in the papal encyclical "Rerum Novarum". This encyclical argued vigorously against what the Church saw as the socialist solution to the social question, "the transference of all property from individuals to the community". Private property was defended as a natural right, as being to the ultimate advantage of the worker himself, and as a defence of the family. Inequality and burdensome work were inevitable, but harmony between property owners and the propertyless was possible, and it was the Church's duty to foster it. The aim therefore was to avoid unnecessary conflict between the various sections of society

through fair and Christian behaviour on all sides. In this context workers' clubs were allowed, but with the defence and propagation of the faith as their primary aim:

"The religious element must be the basis of the association. The faith of the members should be the most important aim, and the Christian faith must permeate the entire organization. Otherwise the association would soon lose its original character; it would become the same as those other associations which exclude religion from their ranks. But what does it profit the worker to win from the association advantages for his earthly comfort, if his soul comes into danger through lack of spiritual nourishment?”. 1

The attitude of the Church was clear: social concern was a proper part of Christianity; but it was to be expressed not through class conflict but through greater harmony and increased Christian behaviour within the given and inevitably unequal society. The greatest help to the worker was to strengthen his faith.

The lay Catholic movement, expressed particularly through the Centre party, was also cautious in its attitude towards "social Catholicism". Few party leaders were themselves of working class origins. Politically the party was committed to the defence of private property and was thus suspicious of those whose radicalism might seem to threaten it. Within the Ruhr this approach by the official party leadership led to conflicts within the party; in the 1874 Reichstag elections in Essen, Laaf, a priest and leader of the radical Catholics urged that the miners should support the party as "the lesser evil", but promised that next time they would put up their own candidates. The Centre Party candidate, Forcade de Biaix, won but was subjected to attacks from Leaf and the miner Rosenkranz over the next few years on the grounds that he did not

sufficiently understand or support the workers' interests. In the 1877 Reichstag election a workers' candidate, Stötzel, was put up against the Centre candidate, and won.¹

The Kulturkampf helped to strengthen the radicals within the Centre party in the 1870's. In Dortmund Lambert Lensing, the editor of the leading Catholic paper the Tremonia, was extremely outspoken in his championing of the workers against the employers. In 1900 "an old miner", writing in the Bochum socialist press, recalled the mood of those years:

"When I got involved in the miners' movement twenty years ago, it was through a Catholic miners' association. In those days there was a quite different life in those associations. The money snobs were told the truth straight, and our chaplain was one of the most vociferous in the struggle against the factory owners... At that time the so-called 'Deutscher Verein' was present in the Ruhr, a pretty gang of hurrah-patriots, Catholic haters and police spies. One comrade at the end of the 1870's wanted to work at the Centrum mine; he was chased away by the mine manager: the poor man was an ultramontane; had he merely been a social democrat he could have worked. At that time it was more dangerous to be an ultramontane than a socialist. Lambert Lensing was one of the most radical. I was regularly intoxicated with the agitation speeches against Capital which he delivered. The Tremonia wrote more bitingly against the employers than the socialist press does today. In consequence the factory workers were forbidden to read Tremonia and other similar ultramontane papers! When today I remember how sharply and maliciously Lensing spoke and wrote against the capitalists at that time, I simply cannot understand how a man can change so much. Bölger, Dietrich, Tölcke and the other socialist agitators were young innocents compared with Lensing, at least as far as fighting the owners was concerned. Today one does not see the Lambert of those days any more. Nor does one recognise his colleagues, the 'red Johannes' /Johannes Pusangel, a Catholic miners' leader/ or Stötzel who spent the '70's constantly in court for slander against the police or the owners."²

¹. Hue Bergarbeiter II pp.317-319.
². IZF, Volksblatt 14.3.1900.
Important factors discouraging the radical wing within the Centre party appear to have been the reconciliation of the party - and the Church - with the state following the end of the Kulturkampf, and the party's need to clearly differentiate itself from the SPD. The party establishment remained firmly in bourgeois hands, even in the Ruhr where workers' votes were the party's mainstay. In Bochum the Centre candidate from 1877 to 1890 was an aristocrat whose family stretched back to the eighth century, Freiherr von Schorlemer-Allst. He was succeeded by two bourgeois candidates, Vattmann in 1890 and Fuchs in 1893 and 1898. The candidate in 1903, Ferse, was a miner and does not appear to have made much impact. The background of Klost, the 1907 candidate, is not known, but in 1912 the party once again put forward a firmly bourgeois candidate, Professor Westkamp. The Bochum party leader was a lawyer, Justizrat Diekamp. Strains appeared in 1893 when the party had to select a new candidate: at first a factory owner named Wiese was put forward, but others called for a working man. Wiese's candidature was withdrawn, and in the end Fuchs was adopted. Although this was approved unanimously at the party's delegate meeting, there were suggestions that many Catholic workers would have preferred someone from their own class. Despite such an episode, however, the Bochum party never underwent a conflict on the scale of that in Essen in the 1870's; power remained firmly in the hands of the party establishment.

There were two main outlets and tangible expressions of "social Catholicism" in the Ruhr, although both were to some extent muted as a


2. IZF, Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiter Zeitung 8.6.1893.
result of the cautious attitude taken by both the Church and lay establishments. These were the Catholic working men's clubs (Arbeitervereine), and the (predominantly Catholic) "Christian" trade unions. The first Catholic Arbeitervereine in the Ruhr were formed in the 1860's and '70's, and although their growth was hindered by the Kulturkampf and the early days of the anti-socialist law, the papal encyclical "Humanus genus" of 1884 which recommended that they be formed marked the beginning of a further expansion. The aims and activities of one club, founded in 1870, were expressed in its first two statutes:

1. The main aim of the society is the raising of the religious and moral level of the workers, starting from the conviction that the social question can only be solved in a peaceable manner through Christianity. Another aim of the society is the material improvement of the workers; in particular, members who have fallen into need through no fault of their own should be supported, as far as the society's resources allow.

2. These aims will be followed: (a) through pleasant and useful diversions, through public lectures on practical and social problems at least once a month, through the reading of suitable writings, singing, and through the enjoyment of Christian and pleasant society; (b) through mutual friendly and helpful behaviour in civil life".

The club thus fostered mutual help and education with an emphasis on religion, a combination which appears to have been characteristic of the clubs generally. In Bochum the Catholic Apprentices' Club had its own building. It had the aim of "protecting native and travelling apprentices from moral dangers" and sought to achieve this by holding lectures and singing and speaking classes. Clubs often had libraries: in Witten in

2. A. Kalis Kirche und Religion im Revier (Essen, 1968) p.49.
3. STAM, RA I 103 Bürgermeister Bochum to RPA 10.11.1892.
1897 the Catholic workers' club had 210 volumes, and the apprentices' club 650 volumes. The clubs were often presided over by non-workers, usually the local priest but sometimes other local notables including even employers. One club, founded at Werden near Essen in 1880, had an honorary committee of twenty-five including the chairman of a mining company, doctors, officials, priests and teachers. The Church's role in guiding the clubs was strengthened in the 1880's by a general requirement that the clubs have a priest, nominated by the bishop, at their head, although a worker should be chairman. This control provided effective support to the Church's generally cautious interpretation of the clubs' role and prevented them from becoming too radical in their support for the workers' causes.

The clubs appear to have generally avoided direct involvement in economic conflicts: during the 1889 strike some priests used the clubs as well as their pulpits to explain their opposition to the stoppage, but without much effect. On the other hand "atheism" and social democracy were bitterly opposed. The SPD generally maintained that religion was a private matter on which the party was neutral. But many leading socialists were atheists, and there were occasional anti-religious campaigns: one such took place in Härde in 1905 and 1906, resulting in

1. StAB, h79 Bürgermeister Witten to KLB 6.h.1897.
3. Krauss & Ostermann Verbandskatholizismus? p.31; Ross Beleaguered Tower p.85
4. STAB, Oberpräsidium 2828 Bd.3, Landrat Gelsenkirchen to Oberpräsident 12.5.1889.
over 150 people leaving the church; at socialist meetings in Gelsenkirchen in the following year people were urged to leave the church on the grounds that it constituted an important support of capitalist society. In 1910 the SPD persuaded around 70 people in Weitmar to leave the church, although the priest then managed to get at least some of them back; in Langendreer too a campaign was mounted, although "the general feeling is against it". Such campaigns appear to have been relatively intermittent and minor aspects of socialist activity. Nevertheless, they gave substance to the charge that the socialists wanted to abolish religion. The bishop of Münster in 1890 issued a warning against the dangers of social democracy:

"The social democrats aim at nothing less than the total dissolution of the existing order of society, the overthrow of the throne and the extirpation of Christianity with all its institutions and creations. They demand the abolition of marriage, the dissolution of property - even each individual's personal property - and the introduction of the socialist republic. Denial of God and unbelief should become general and rule according to their views".

Attempts by the socialists to show that they aimed at nothing of the sort met with little success. During the 1898 Reichstag election the SPD issued leaflets in Polish exclaiming that the party's attitude was that religion was a private matter. The (Catholic) Wittener Volkszeitung denied this:

"The social democrats want to rob us of our religion so as to use us more surely for their own ends. So, Polish workers, do not give your votes to the candidates of a party which wishes to take away the religion of your fathers and only follows goals which can never be achieved".

1. StAB, h81, RPA to Minister des Innern, 10.12.1906; StAM, RA I 99 Stadt Gelsenkirchen to RPA 11.9.1907.
2. StAB, h82 Amt Weitmar to KLB 8.8.1910; Amt Langendreer to KLB 12.8.1910; KLB to RPA 27.8.1912.
3. StAM, Oberpräsidium 2693 (Bd.2), Germania 2.12.1890.

It is doubtful, however, whether even if the socialists had managed to convince the Church that they were indifferent to religion this would have sufficed to avoid the profound distrust which existed between themselves and the Catholic Church and its organizations. For the view of the Pope and the bishops, as we have seen, was that the faith was the prime aim and took precedence over any secular venture in which Catholics and non-Catholics might otherwise co-operate. Religious neutrality was not enough; the only organizations approved were those with a positive Catholic content. This exclusiveness extended to reading matter. Wiarius Polski, the Polish nationalist paper in the Ruhr, declared:

"No true Catholic is in a position to maintain that he can read whatever he wishes, since if the Church forbids any particular book everyone must follow its guidance. We have a great selection of Polish-Catholic books and writings, and only such things may be read. Members of a Catholic club too should not conclude that everyone may read what he wishes; the conclusion can only be that a Catholic may read only Catholic newspapers". 1

Seven years later the paper was urging its readers to burn any copies of the socialist paper they might find. 2

The clubs were successful in attracting support. In them friendship and sometimes more tangible support could be found in what was for many a strange and disorientating environment. The presence of the priest provided reassurance and legitimacy. In addition, special clubs were provided by the Church for young people. One of those in Gelsenkirchen,

1. StAB, h50, Wiarius Polski 1.7.1890.
2. StAB, h79, Oberbürgermeister Pochun to RPA 31.7.1897, Gazeta Robotnicza 31.7.1898.
which was also attended by young Catholics from Pulmke, met each Sunday and Monday evening: "On Sunday evenings religious, social and historical talks are held, and on Monday evening there are lessons in religion, writing, book-keeping and drawing. There is a large library. And for amusement there is chess, billiards and bowling."  

In Wanne the Church provided two Catholic clubs for young men: one for apprentices and one for boys who had left school; the latter sought, in the words of the priest, "to sustain them in their religion and love of their fatherland, and to protect them from the manifold dangers which are present at this age. This is achieved through edifying and instructive talks, through discussion together and through singing."  

The provision of workers' clubs, run by the priest and devoted both to the maintenance of religious faith and to more social objectives, was one important means by which the Catholic Church sought to maintain its influence in the new industrial environment. Such clubs helped to ensure that despite the high mobility and other changes, social life in the area continued to be divided in large measure along denominational lines. The clubs, however, were only one manifestation of "social Catholicism": a second, and from the Church's point of view a less welcome one, was the Christian trade union movement.

1. STAM, Landratsamt Gelsenkirchen h8, Amt Bismarck to Landrat Gelsenkirchen 30.9.1902.

2. STAK, Landratsamt Gelsenkirchen h8, Pfarrer Schnettler to Amt Wanne 12.9.1902.
Catholic trade unionism

Militant involvement by Catholics in miners' strikes and in trade union activity dated back to the earliest of such conflicts in the Ruhr. A miners' strike in 1872, starting around (largely Catholic) Essen but spreading to a number of pits near Bochum, was supported by radical Catholics and was popularly known as the "Jesuit strike". The strike failed but was rapidly followed by the first attempt to form a miners' union. Its executive consisted of two Catholics, two Protestants, and one Lassallean socialist. The union aimed to further the material interests of the miners and not to concern itself with religious or political affairs. But it never appears to have effectively got off the ground, and instead disappeared soon after its foundation. A further attempt to form a union was made in 1878 by Rosenkranz, a miner and supporter of Iaaf in his conflict with the Centre party establishment in Essen. Although himself a Catholic he sought a non-denominational and non-political organization and was willing to work with socialists to this end. The socialist influence became too marked for even the radical Catholics, however, and the "Rosenkranz Union" was denounced not only by the Catholic clergy but also by Iaaf who called for a specifically Christian union. The anti-socialist law put a final end to this attempt.

The inability of even radical Catholics to work with socialists in one

2. STA1-, RA I 82 Reg. Präsident Düsseldorf to RPA 1.5.1906; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.25.
A united miners' union was formed in 1889, following the great strike of that year in which miners of both denominations and all political persuasions participated. This union too was supposed to be politically and religiously neutral, but in fact disputes soon broke out and only five months after its foundation the "Christians" - mainly Catholics - seceded and formed their own rival organisation. This did not last long - largely because of the economic slump - but in 1894 the Christlich-soziale Gewerkverein der Bergarbeiter was formed. Although it never gained as many members as the socialist-dominated "old" union (henceforth known as the Alter Verband), the Gewerkverein was a lasting and successful organisation: by 1910 it had nearly 83,000 members, compared with the Alter Verband's 123,000.

The Gewerkverein, although vehemently anti-socialist and "Christian" in its views, was largely independent of Church control. In contrast to the prime importance, in the view of the Church hierarchy, of the defence of the faith, the union saw as its main concern the defence of workers' interests in an industrial setting: although the union was dominated by Catholics, it was in theory non-denominational and always contained an important minority of Protestants. This policy of non-denominationalism, which applied to the Christian trade union movement generally in Germany, was strongly deplored by many of the German bishops and was the subject of considerable controversy within the Church,

1. STAM, RA I 82 Reg. Präsident Düsseldorf to RPA 1.5.1906; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.112.
particularly when in 1900 most (but not all) the bishops publicly came out in support of denominational craft associations under close clerical supervision and against the inter-denominational independent Christian trade unions. The Gewerkverein did not hesitate to denounce the bishops' views. The union was also out of step with some leading Churchmen and other Catholics through its willingness both in principle and in practice to adopt militant methods in industrial disputes, particularly the strike: the Gewerkverein co-operated fully with the Alter Verband and other unions in the 1905 miners' strike, and on some issues - for example, in 1909 on the question of labour exchanges - the Gewerkverein adopted a more militant stance than the Alter Verband. Even when in 1912 the Gewerkverein refused to join the other unions in strike action and thereby sabotaged the stoppage, the grounds were essentially tactical rather than because of any rejection of strikes in principle. Such an approach to industrial conflict was not that espoused by many Catholic supporters of notions of social and industrial harmony, particularly those Catholics who were themselves substantial property owners.

The Gewerkverein was thus essentially free from control either by the Church or by the Centre Party. Nevertheless, strong links did exist

1. StAB, h79, RFA to l'Inister des Innern 24.11.1900; Ross Beleaguered Tower chapters 5-7; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.61; H. Homsen Bergarbeiter: Ausstellung zur Geschichte der organisierten Bergarbeiterbewegung in Deutschland (Fochum, 1969); H.J. Wallraff "Die Belastung einer Gewerkschaft durch ideologische Differenzen" in K.O. Vetter (ed) Vom Sozialistengesetz zur Mitbestimmung (Köln, 1975).


3. Perhaps the most notable example was the Count von Ballestrem, a leading landowner and industrialist in Silesia, a Centre party Reichstag deputy and President of the Reichstag, and an opponent of trade unionism: Ross Beleaguered Tower p.71.
between the union and the Catholic establishment. Some prominent Churchmen, notably Archbishop Fischer of Cologne, did support the Christian trade unions; and when in 1912 the Papacy came to declare its view on the trade union question it adopted a carefully ambiguous policy which left the unions essentially free to continue and develop their work.¹ The union was dominated by Centre supporters: although the executive committee was evenly divided between Catholics and Protestants, it was Centre supporters who usually held the main offices. August Brust, the Gewerkverein's leader for many years was a Centre party deputy in the Prussian Landtag, and later leaders such as Johann Effert, Hermann Köster and the Imbusch brothers were Centre party supporters.² At the local level too there were sometimes close links between the union and the Catholic establishment: when the Wiemelhausen branch was formed in 1895 the guest of honour was the local priest, and the union's aims were explained to the meeting by a teacher.³ There was thus substantial ground for Protestant suspicion that the Gewerkverein, despite its ostensible inter-denominationalism, was close to the Catholic Church and the Centre Party. And social democrats remained rigorously excluded: paragraph h of the union's statute explicitly stated that members were the enemies of social democracy. Even though this clause was modified in the aftermath of the 1905 strike, Gewerkverein hostility to social democracy in general and to the allegedly "red" Alter Verband in

1. Fischer had worked for many years in Essen, and during the 1905 miners' strike he donated one thousand marks to the Gewerkverein; ibid. pp. 102, 108.
2. Hue Bergarbeiter II p.615.
3. StAB, 1463, Amt Bochum II to KLB 12.3.1895.
particular remained strong, and reached a new intensity at the time of the abortive 1912 miners' strike.

Through the Catholic clubs and the Gewerkverein Catholic workers were provided with powerful and popular organisations providing both social and economic support in the new industrial environment. By focussing the workers' social life and economic support on their specific denomination, however, these organisations consolidated and strengthened the existing divisions between Catholics and Protestants, and between "Christians" and social democrats. Community became associated very largely with denomination, although in the case of the Poles this was qualified by loyalty to a specific Polish and nationalist version of Catholicism. The main effect was to isolate Catholic workers from their Protestant and social democratic fellow workers.

Protestant workers' clubs

There was no tradition of Protestant social concern and activity to alleviate the lot of miners in the Ruhr to parallel that of the Catholic Church and Catholic lay organisations. The employing families in the area were mainly Protestant.\(^1\) They were mainly National Liberal in their politics, and the connection between their faith, their politics and their activities as employers was strengthened by the experience of the Kulturkampf in the 1870's, when it was apparently unpatriotic

\(^1\) Catholic employers like Thyssen were the exception. H. Croon "Die wirtschaftlichen Führingsschichten des Ruhrgebietes in der Zeit von 1890 bis 1933" in H. Patze (ed) Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte (Göttingen, 1972) p.118.
Catholics who led the workers. The Protestant church in the Ruhr was firmly identified with the employers, the new Reich and the National Liberal party.

Nevertheless, it became clear that some Protestant response was needed to the social problems of the area. The spur to activity was given by the apparent successes of first the Catholics and later the socialists in wooing the workers. In 1904, Friedrich König, the Superintendent of the Bochum area synod, outlined the issues as he saw them:

"How great are the tasks with which the Church is confronted by the new configuration of social life in our time, by the distance from the Church to which the anti-godly Weltanschauung has brought great numbers of our parishioners, by the influx of great masses of people of both German and Masurian origin into our synod's district; to say nothing of the struggle against the dominance of the Roman power in German life which has been forced upon us". 1

But the Church was responding to the challenge:

"How manifold are the proclamations of the gospel, in special services, children's services, bible studies, community classes during evangelizing campaigns and so forth. This is a loyal effort to rally the susceptible members of our district, to prove the youth of both sexes, and to unite the Protestant-Christian and patriotic forces of German life. What a labour of love for the imperilled, the sick and the needy parishioners through the manifold exercise of the Church's social mission, through parish nurses, women's clubs, housing assistance and so on. It all demonstrates how the Church in its synodical organs has become conscious of its newly received obligations in the social sphere". 2

Such activities were not sufficient in themselves to counter the threats to the Protestant Church. In the 1880's it was clear that the Catholic workers' clubs were exerting an appeal even to some Protestants and might in the end undermine their faith. It was to counter this that in 1882

1. H. Rothert Kirchengeschichte des westfälisch-rheinischen Industriegebietes vom evangelischen Standpunkt (Dortmund, 1926) p.112.
2. ibid.
Ludwig Fischer, a Protestant miner from Gelsenkirchen, went to his local pastor and suggested the formation of a rival Protestant workers' club. The pastor was sceptical of the suggestion, but Fischer found support in a local teacher. In May 1882 the first Protestant Workers' Club (evangelische Arbeiterverein) was founded. The tone of the new organisation was revealed in its statutes:

"The Protestant Workers' Club is founded on the Protestant faith and has the aim:

a) of arousing and strengthening Protestant consciousness amongst the followers of the creed;

b) of achieving the moral uplift and general education of its members;

c) of ensuring and cultivating amicable relations between employers and employees;

d) of maintaining loyalty to Kaiser and Reich".  

This programme showed clearly that any support offered to the members would stop well short of serious conflict with employers. Nevertheless, the club prospered and more were founded. As association of Protestant clubs in the Rhineland and Westphalia was formed, and in 1889 Dr. Forster from Schalke, the association's chairman, explained the clubs' aims at their assembly in Witten; again the threat from the Catholics was prominent:

"The workers' clubs have in the first place the aim of strengthening Protestant consciousness; secondly they serve to provide an effective barrier to Roman influence, without, however, being intolerant of different beliefs; they also work for a peaceful relationship between employers and employees; they concern themselves too with the elucidation of social problems...."  


2. STAN, Oberpräsidium 2828a Neue Preussische Zeitung 11.7.1889; see Göhre Evangelisch-Soziale Bewegung p.114.
The legalization of the SPD in 1890 created a new fear for the Protestant Church. The Westphalian clergy were instructed by their provincial synod to keep a close eye on events in their parishes, and particularly any social democratic agitation. They were to visit their parishioners in their homes, study social problems, develop their help for the sick and needy, and in general to use their influence to counter the threat to their charges. The laity had their duties too:

"The members of the presbytery have a duty to support with all their ability, through personal participation and any other permissible support, the clubs and other activities of their parish established to fight unbelief and unpatriotic persuasions, particularly Protestant workers' clubs formed to promote Christian, patriotic and socially peaceable views, as well as Protestant mens' and youths' clubs. They are to offer their help in forming such clubs and similar ones to combat unbelief in those parishes where they do not yet exist".

From combatting Catholicism, the justification for the clubs thus swung in large part to combatting socialism. Two months later a long statement directed against the social democrats (although not mentioning them explicitly) was read in all Protestant Churches in Westphalia:

"...A deeply rooted movement has taken hold of our people. Our parishes are affected by it, and the struggle is carried right into family life. Many hearts have been disquieted, and many consciences have been thrown into disorder. A deep cleft threatens to ruin our people. Amongst the lower orders dissatisfaction and complaints increase, amongst the better off discomfort and impatience, amongst others perplexity; in many spheres unrestrained pleasure seeking and immorality have gained the upper hand. Crudity and indiscipline are openly prevalent. There is collective guilt from which none are free. It has befallen us in accordance with the words: he who sows the wind will reap the whirlwind. For long enough unbelief has been toyed with and belief laughed at and mocked, and now the fruits are before all eyes. In so far as it is a matter of changing or re-ordering the economic conditions of the people's life it is not our aim to discuss it. Rather, we welcome everything which achieves the removal of poverty by peaceful means and which aims at achieving a better lot for the small men and the economically weak in harmony with the noble efforts of our beloved Kaiser and King.

1. STAM, Oberpräsidium 2693 Bd.2 Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung 30.9.1890.
But there is a dark force which wants to monopolize the rearrangement of these matters for itself - a force which wants to destroy everything which has been sacred for our fathers and for ourselves in Church, family and state; but this force is not able to replace them with anything better, and above all cannot and does not wish to create anything other than a war of all against all and a desolate wilderness in place of our Christian and moral heritage, the ornament and honour of our German people. Under the pretence of wishing to improve the condition of the people, they proclaim, at first secretly and covertly but later openly and fearlessly, the renunciation of the fatherland and the destruction of the sanctity of the family. That is the ungodly and bleak teaching of modern times.

We declare ourselves firmly against this spirit and its seductive powers and call on the Christian and moral force of our parishes. We maintain and testify to the truth that all situations and all mankind are under the power of the one God. It is God's will that rich and poor, the higher and the lower orders of society, should exist with each other; no power in the world can change this, any more than the course of the sun in the heavens or death on earth can be altered..."

The Protestant workers' clubs, like their Catholic counterparts, were generally supervised by the local minister. They met regularly for talks and discussions, and activities included Sunday outings and walks. Increasingly the clubs provided their members with insurance and friendly schemes and even co-op stores. Libraries were common. In the early 1890's a central building for the local clubs was established in Bochum, with meeting rooms and restaurant facilities. Some clubs built their own premises, and in 1909 an office to give help and advice to members was opened in Herne. Cultural activities, often of a propagandistic nature, were held: in 1890 the Witten club put on a play with a message, "Luther and his times". Special youth clubs were also founded: the life of one in Wanne was described by the pastor:

1. STAH, Oberpräsidium 2693 Bd.2 Neue Preussische Kreuz-Zeitung 29.11.1890
2. Göhre Evangelisch-Soziale Bewegung pp.112-113; StAB, III; StAB, Magistrats-Bericht 1892/93 p.56; BA, 18/68, Louise Tiefbau Aufsichtsrat 6.5.1901; STAH, Oberpräsidium 2694 Bd.2 Siegener Volksblatt 18.5.1909; StAB, 479, Bürgermeister Witten to KLB 6.5.1897.
"The young persons' club in this area brings together young people between the ages of 11 and 20 on Sunday afternoons. It seeks to help them to a proper, Christian Sunday and to protect them from the dangerous life of the taverns which only too frequently ruin body and soul, and from the worldly diversions and dissipations to which, unfortunately, only too many young people abandon themselves these days. It seeks to promote their spiritual, physical and moral welfare. The meetings take place from 5 to 7 o'clock. For about the first hour the young people play games such as Mühle, draughts or Haling, talk or read the magazines or books in the club's library. The club's affairs are then dealt with, instruction given on this or that matter, or serious or comic stories are told or read out. Every meeting is closed with a song, a short reflection on a text, a prayer and the blessing. A few times a year the club puts on a larger festivity in which music from the club's brass band, addresses, singing and declamation alternate with each other...." 1

In all these respects the Protestants were following the same path as the Catholics - and indeed the social democrats. They were providing an increasingly broad range of services to their members, hoping in the process to bind them more firmly to the organisation. Social and community life was being increasingly tied to specific denominational loyalties.2

The Protestant clubs, in contrast to the "papist" and "ultramontane" Catholics and to "treacherous" social democrats, prided themselves on their patriotism, the lack of which was itself seen as a crucial moral failing. Religious and patriotic talks and songs seem to have been almost interchangeable.3 In Herne a Protestant committee for youth work was formed on the eve of war, with the aim:


2. So far did the provision of purely social activities and services go that there was concern about the alleged "secularization" of these in principle religious organisations. Brepohl Industrievolk Ruhrgebiet p.132; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.238.

"of protecting our youth through appropriate measures from physical and moral dangers and of putting back on the right lines those who have already gone astray. It is the duty of our nation to assist in this area, in view of the moral and economic strength and its immense value lost in the flood swallowing up defenceless young men and girls if a life belt is not thrown them in time. A generation must be raised with sun in its eyes, steel in its sinews, pure minds and defiant hearts; a generation which honours God and the King and is German to the marrow". 1

The Protestant clubs interpreted their commitment to industrial peace as a general support for the employers and an unwillingness to support strikes or trade union activities. In 1885 a Bochum Protestant Workers' and Citizens' Club opposed Catholic agitation for legal controls on the length of the working day and Sunday work. 2 During the 1889 miners' strike the clubs called on their members to accept the employers' promises and return to work. 3 They claimed that only around half of the 6,200 miners organised in the clubs at the time stopped work, a much smaller proportion than amongst the miners generally. 4 Nevertheless, despite this and despite their hostility both to Catholics and social democrats, the ambiguity of the Protestant workers' clubs was soon evident: how could they credibly act as spokesmen for the workers' interests if they rejected vigorous action against the employers? Different Protestants answered this problem in different ways, and divisions soon became evident within the movement. Pastor Neumann from Frankfurt became the spokesman for a Protestant workers' movement which

1. BA, 1h/119, Ev. Jugend-Ausschuss Herne to Gewerkschaft Friedrich der Grosse 20.5.1911.
3. STA/H, Oberpräsidium 2828 Bd.1h, Westfälische Volkszeitung 18.5.1889; ibid. Bd.3, Landrat Gelsenkirchen to SPA 12.5.1889.
4. STA/H, Oberpräsidium 2828a, Neue Preussische Zeitung 11.7.1889.
aimed at social progress rather than conservatism. The Ruhr clubs generally opposed these ideas, but at the clubs' national conference in 1893 a compromise was reached between the supporters of Neumann and the conservatives. Within the Ruhr itself divisions also appeared, despite the dominance of the conservatives. In 1894 38 workers' clubs and 19 miners' associations (Knappenvereine) joined with their Catholic counterparts in the foundation of the Christian miners' union, the Gewerkverein. The conservatives, in contrast, insisted that all trade union activity was unacceptable. By 1897, however, it was clear that the Essen, Elberfeld and Rhineland clubs were ready to adopt a more progressive stance.

The main strength of the conservative wing of the Protestant workers' club movement lay with the Bochum and Gelsenkirchen clubs, led by Hermann Franken, the chairman of the area association. Franken was said to be of working class origins and to have become a factory owner in Schalke through his own efforts. He was a National Liberal in politics, and was supported in the Bochum district by Rudolf Quandel, the editor of the main National Liberal paper, the Rheinisch-Westfälische Tageblatt. The hardening line of the Bochum area was expressed in 1897 by the Wattenscheid club, which declared that its aims were chiefly "Protestant and national, and only in third place social". In March 1898 the split went so far that the "Bochumers" threatened to leave the Rhineland

and Westphalia association; it was only the threat from the social democrats in the Reichstag election of that year (elections in which Franken stood, and won, as National Liberal candidate in Bochum) that prevented a split. The "Bochumers" were given a greater say in the association and more seats on its executive.1

This compromise did not end the dispute. In 1901 the split reappeared on the question of participation in trade unions. Once again the Bochum area under the leadership of Franken proved the staunchest opponent of change. There were demands that Neumann, the main spokesman for union participation, be expelled from the movement, and some clubs threatened to disaffiliate if this was not done. In May 1902 the clubs' national association held a conference in Düsseldorf at which Neumann and Stöcker (another relative progressive) failed to be re-elected on to the national executive. At this the Württemberg association disaffiliated. Quandel expressed his satisfaction with the outcome in a letter to a Bochum factory owner:

"There is no doubt that the Protestant workers' clubs, which have made it their task to further the love of Kaiser and Reich, to strengthen Protestant awareness and to preserve good relations between employers and employees, are of particular importance at this time when the working classes are being increasingly courted for endeavours which run directly counter to national and social peace. In the turbid flood of anti-monarchical and revolutionary waves in which a large part of the German workers are caught today the Protestant workers' clubs have proved themselves as a sure and immovable rock in the ocean on which the shock of the anti-state and anti-law and order waves break in vain. In particular the clubs of our area association have consistently shown that they take seriously the defence against the false socialist spirit and

the fostering of good relations between employers and employees, especially recently through their firm attitude towards the efforts of men like pastor Neumann. They have earned recognition from all loyal people". 1

After this the national leadership did its best to stop further discussion of the trade union question. The "Bochumers" mistrust was not, however, allayed, and they temporarily broke off to form their own Protestant Workers' Association (Evangelische Arbeiterbund). Although the breach was healed quickly they retained their separate identity. 2

The 1905 miners' strike presented the Protestant clubs with a further challenge. This time they did not come out against the strike as strongly as in 1889; indeed; they supported some of the demands raised by the strikers. But this did not prevent some Protestant leaders, particularly Franken and Quandel, from issuing leaflets urging an end to the strike; and there was a bitter newspaper war between Quandel and the Gewerkverein's paper, Der Bergknappe, in which the latter accused Quandel of doing his best to sabotage the strike by spreading false reports. 3 But Franken and Quandel were fighting a losing battle; there is no evidence that much notice was taken of their words, and after the strike there was a large influx of members of Protestant workers' clubs into the Gewerkverein. In April 1905 Franken resigned from the chair of the Bochum area association in protest at the soft line which he felt the clubs had generally taken in the strike, and at

1. IZF, Volksblatt 12.9.1902.
2. StAB, b80, RPA to Minister des Innern 15.11.1901; 24.11.1902; 8.12.1903; 20.12.1904; Erakelmann Soziale Frage p.193
3. STAa, Oberbergamt Dortmund 1846, RPA to Minister des Innern 9.2.1905; Oberbergamt Dortmund 1845, Der Bergknappe 18.2.1905.
the reforms which the government now proposed and which were welcomed by many clubs. Under his successor, pastor Bokamp from Bochum, the clubs in the area took a more conciliatory line. At a conference in Wattenscheid in 1906 a new approach to the trade union question was accepted by the association, although against opposition from some members. The new resolution read:

"1. The conference recognises the trade union movement as justified when it is of a purely economic nature and seeks to further the common good in co-operation with other professional classes; since the workers can never solve the worker question alone.

2. The conference therefore expects members of the Protestant workers' clubs, in accordance with their constitutional concern for a peaceful relationship between employers and employees, to avoid or leave such trade union organisations as are linked with social democracy, and recommends them only to join such unions which are based on national and Christian principles, limit themselves simply to the representation of professional interests, and therefore refrain from any influence on the religious and political convictions and activity of their members.

3. The conference therefore makes it a duty of members of Protestant workers' clubs who are members of or join the Christian Gewerkverein to ensure within this union that they avoid any link with the social democratic unions, since any such link directly contradicts the constitution of the Protestant workers' clubs as well as that of the Christian and national workers' organisations".

Thus although Protestants were now permitted to defend their economic interest through unions, and could even join Catholic dominated organisations, their hostility towards the socialists remained as explicit and strong as ever.

Seven years later the Protestant workers' clubs gave strong support to the refusal of the Gewerkverein to join the miners' strike of 1912, and

1. StAB, H 80, RPA to Minister des Innern 22.12.1905; IZF Bergarbeiterzeitung 8.5.1905.

2. STAH, RA I 98, Polizei Commissar Bochum to RPA 12.11.1906.
to its appeal to the government to intervene to defend miners who wished
to continue to work. The leaders of the Rhineland and Westphalia
association issued a stern warning to their followers:

"Social-democratic and anarcho-socialist agitators are trying to
drive the Ruhr miners into a strike. At some pits the work force
is already partially out. We urgently warn our members not to
participate in the inadequately justified and therefore hopeless
strike. The workers' cause will only be harmed by such a stoppage.
The German workers have no cause to enter a strike in favour of
anti-German English industry, or to satisfy the agitation needs of
the Social Democratic Party..." 1

The Protestant clubs thus consistently opposed strikes and did their
best to maintain harmonious relations between employers and workers.
Some employers seem to have approved their actions and made financial
contributions to the clubs. 2 How successful they were in convincing
their members of the need for harmonious relations with the employers
is less clear, and the fact that Franken eventually had to resign
suggests that many workers of the clubs had limited sympathy with his
strong views. But even if many Protestant workers did not fully
accept the views of Franken and the more extreme conservatives in the
leadership of the clubs, there can be little doubt that the effect of
the clubs was to strengthen the conservative element within the working
class and greatly to weaken the ability of social democratic leaders to
appeal successfully to large numbers of Protestant workers.

1. STAM, Oberbergamt Dortmund 1856, Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung 9.3.1912.

2. In 1901 the Louise Tiefbau mining company contributed 500 marks towards
the cost of a new home for the Parop club; in Essen Krupp contributed
to the Protestant workers' club. But at least some employers were
disappointed at the clubs' acceptance of trade unionism in 1905.
BA, 18/68 Louise Tiefbau Aufsichtsrat meeting 6.5.1901; K. Saul
Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung im Kaiserreich (Düsseldorf, 1974)
pp. 145 ff. See also BA, 11/119 Zeche Friedrich der Grosse to
Bergrevierbeamten Herne 5.12.1912.
The opposition of the Protestant clubs to the social democrats was expressed not only on such issues as the trade union question but also more directly in elections. Ludwig Fischer, the founder of the original club in Gelsenkirchen, became an office holder in the National Liberal party. In the 1893 Reichstag election Fischer wanted to stand as a candidate in Bochum himself, but was eventually persuaded by the National Liberals to stand down in favour of Dr. Haarmann, the mayor of Witten. The party agreed, however, that in future they would consult the leaders of the Protestant workers' clubs before selecting candidates. In 1898 Hermann Franken himself stood as candidate, and the clubs were particularly active in his campaign. Pastor Goecker, addressing the Witten club, urged them to vote for Franken, "who was himself a worker, who did not have inherited wealth, and who, basing himself on the Protestant faith, has a heart for the workers..." Shortly before the poll the executive of the Bochum area Protestant workers' clubs issued an appeal:

"The Protestant workers' clubs are not political clubs. But their members, as individuals, must be made fully aware that every Protestant Christian and patriotic voter is co-responsible for the tremendous decision of election day. Protestant voters! You must not allow an unbelieving and unpatriotic social democrat, nor an anti-Protestant ultra-montane to get the victory. The only candidate in the Bochum electoral district who comes into question for us and for you is Herr Hermann Franken from Schalke...Every man on board! Every Protestant worker must be an agitator! Try to encourage the lukewarm, to set right those led astray! Confront them seriously with the question, 'What has Fuchs, what has Lehmann achieved, and what has Franken achieved?' Anyone who answers this honestly will not find the decision difficult, he will vote on the 16th of June for Hermann Franken of Schalke!"

2. IZF, Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiter-Zeitung 24.5.1893.
At subsequent elections the Protestant clubs supported National Liberal candidates. In 1903, despite the internal difficulties of the movement, most of the clubs came out for the party.\(^1\) And in 1912 the party selected as candidate a miner, Heckmann, who was a member of the Protestant Workers' Association.\(^2\) In that year Heckmann won the Bochum seat back from the social democrats who had won the previous two elections.

The religious clubs were generally successful in recruiting members, although they, like most organisations in the Ruhr, suffered from the geographical mobility of many workers. In Altenbochum the SPD branch had 280 male and 100 female members in 1911; these members came from neighbouring Laer and Querenberg as well as from Altenbochum itself. The Catholic miners' club had 180 members, and two Church sponsored Polish clubs had a total of 310 members. Two Protestant workers' clubs had 178 members between them.\(^3\) There was thus no question in this mixed area of any one club being particularly preeminent. The religious organisations showed no sign of losing their influence on the workers as the war approached; in 1913 the Langendreer Amtmann could report that in the last year the local SPD branch had declined from 600 to 450 members and that the social democratic agitation had slackened and lost impetus; on the other hand, however, "there are strong Protestant and Catholic workers' clubs which have frequently held well attended meetings and have had a strong growth in membership."\(^4\) In 1901 there were reported to be

1. StAB, 480, RPA to Minister des Innern 8.12.1903.
2. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 2.2.1912.
3. StAB, 482, Amt Bochum II to KLB 18.8.1911; KLB to RPA 25.8.1911.
4. StAB, 482, Amt Harpen to KLB 12.8.1913.
37 Protestant workers' clubs in the Bochum-Gelsenkirchen area; by 1909 (although the area may not have been exactly the same) the organisation had 69 clubs and some 12,500 members - an increase at least sufficient to keep up with the growth of the population. Although the numerical evidence is patchy and unsatisfactory, there is no doubt that the religious clubs managed to maintain their popularity in the years before 1914.

Conclusions

The Churches and religious organisations thus exerted an important influence on the new working class in the Ruhr. They played a central role in the socialization of the workers in the new industrial environment. They provided an essentially familiar and reassuring setting for the establishment of social and community ties, and their activities extended well beyond the narrowly religious. The backing of priest or pastor provided a social as well as a religious legitimacy on such organisations. They filled an important social and cultural need and formed a crucial element in the shaping of working class social consciousness and social life.

One of their chief effects, however, was that the existing divisions within the working class were preserved and strengthened. Social ties

1. StAB, H80, RFA to Minister des Innern 15.11.1901; STAH, Oberpräsidium 269/4 Bd.2 Siegener Volksblatt 18.5.1909.

2. The importance of denominational clubs in filling the social vacuum left by the withdrawal of the state from active and detailed involvement in the miners' lives in the 1850's and 1860's has been stressed by Tenfelde: Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.362.
and social loyalties were directed not to workers' clubs and workers' organisations per se but to Catholic or Protestant workers' organisations. A four-way division was established between German Catholics, Poles, Protestants and social democrats (with further smaller minorities), all of whom were in large measure isolated from and suspicious of the others. In later years, particularly after 1905, some of the hostility between Catholics and Protestants was overcome - but largely as the result of their common strong opposition to the social democrats. There was thus not one working class subculture in the Ruhr: rather there were a number of rival ones, outwardly similar in many respects (notably in the love of clubs and associations which was common throughout the district) but characterized by profound mutual suspicion and incomprehension.

The political effects of the denominational workers' organisations were therefore in two ways conservative: first, through the overt political beliefs and attitudes which they encouraged: varying degrees of commitment to social and industrial harmony, support for emperor and fatherland, and bitter hostility to social democratic ideas of social change; second, and perhaps ultimately more important, through the preservation and strengthening of religious, ethnic and social divisions within the working class and through the profound hindrances which this put in the way of any attempt to create a united class struggle for change.

The political importance of the denominational workers' organisations was recognised by the state authorities, who classified their regular reports on the denominational unions and clubs under the heading "Measures against Social Democracy". The Arnsberg Regierungs-Präsidet.
whose area included the eastern Ruhr, observed in 1895:

"It is above all the patriotic and Christian associations, such as the Protestant workers' and youth clubs, the Catholic workers' and youth clubs and the Catholic apprentices' clubs which offer the possibility of bringing the advance of social democracy to an effective halt. The monthly meetings with instructive lectures and all sorts of exhibitions revive in a gratifying way the feeling for home and family, for fatherland and Church, and in many places bear witness to the friendly relations between employer and employee. The glorious days of the 1870/71 war are celebrated with wide participation in these clubs, and it is to be expected that these festivities will be of lasting influence on many workers". 1

1. StAB, 479 RPA to Minister des Innern 20.10.1895. This official view of religious organisations appears to have been widespread: from the Amtmann in Langendreer who supported the creation there of a new Catholic parish as a bastion against social democracy, to the German Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg who interceded at the Vatican on behalf of the Christian trade unions on exactly the same grounds. Croon "Studien" p.102; Ross Peleaguered Tower pp.112-113.
CHAPTER 4  WORK IN THE MINES

In the preceding chapters we have noted that the newly emerging working class in the Ruhr, despite its numerical preponderance and economic importance, was characterized by strong and persisting internal divisions and by a lack of settled continuity. We have focussed in particular on such aspects as differing geographical and ethnic origins, the lack of settled community, divisive housing patterns, and the persistence of denominational divisions in social and cultural life. In this chapter we will turn to that feature of the miners' lives which appeared to offer a focus for and an incentive to some sort of workers' solidarity and unity which might transcend these social divisions: the common experience of work in the mines. Did this experience form a basis for working class unity, despite the social divisions? Did the miners, as has recently been suggested, form an "occupational community", based on shared work experience and characterized by solidarity rather than division? The test of these questions will come in later chapters, when we examine various expressions of protest and conflict between workers and employers. Such conflict grew in large measure out of the experience of work itself, and in this chapter we will attempt to identify and examine some of its main features.

Jobs at the mine

The great majority of miners in the Ruhr went through approximately the same career structure: following this through will provide a framework to understand the main mine-workers' jobs.

1. Crew Industry and Community pp.321-338. See also the theory of the "isolated mass" applied to miners by Kerr and Siegel in "Interindustry Propensity to Strike".
Although boys left school at the age of fourteen, they were forbidden by law from working below ground until the age of sixteen, and thus for their first two years had to be employed at the surface. They booked trucks as they came up from the pit, noted the face from which they came, helped to empty them, to sort the coal from "dirt" or stone and to load the coal into railway wagons. They did lamp cleaning and general odd jobs. Because there was only a limited amount of such work at the surface, many youths on leaving school at first sought alternative factory work and only applied to the pits when they became eligible to work underground: this in turn led to complaints from mine companies that they were losing young workers, including miners' sons, who found mine-work unacceptable after a taste of factory work.

At sixteen the youth went underground. Here he did such jobs as man the main gates at the shaft, control loaded trucks on inclines and when they arrived at the shaft (Bremsers) and handle the pit ponies. At eighteen he became a haulier (Schlepper), responsible for transporting the trucks between the coal face and the pit shaft. The haulier had a limited amount of assistance in this, mainly from pit ponies but to an increasing extent from machines. Ponies were first introduced into the pits in the 1850's, and in 1903 it was estimated that there were still around 8,000 in the region. The introduction of mechanical transport was slower in the Ruhr than in some other coal fields such as in the Saar or in England, because there were more curves and bends, due to the

1. Münz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.29.
2. BA, 18/22.
relatively convoluted coal seams. Nevertheless, during the 1890's a number of mines introduced powered rope systems for pulling trucks over stretches of around 1,000 metres or more. Over shorter distances powered shutes (whereby the coal was shaken forward) and conveyor belts were tried in the last decade before the war, though with only limited success. But despite the use of ponies, and increasingly of machines, the haulier remained primarily dependent on his own sheer physical strength, particularly in the narrower, steeper and more contorted passages.

After around two years as a haulier (and his period of military service), the young man became an apprentice hewer (Lehrhauer). Here he learned the art of cutting coal and all the associated skills of the hewer, working under the eye of an experienced older hewer. In addition to actually cutting coal and shovelling it into the trucks, the apprentice hewer was usually responsible for pushing the full trucks from the face to the point where they were collected by the hauliers.  

It was only after this succession of jobs, and after at least a year as an apprentice hewer, that the young man normally became a full hewer. Hewers formed the largest single category of worker in the mine, and were the group responsible for actually cutting and filling the coal. The hewer relied until after the first world war almost exclusively on his traditional tools of pick and explosive. Often in extremely cramped


conditions, perhaps crouching or even lying down if the seam was narrow, he hacked out a section of the face, either to try to get the coal to fall from its own weight after the removal of temporary props, or to place an explosive charge which would loosen it. Once the coal was loosened he had to shovel it back and into trucks for conveyance from the face. This might involve considerable contortions in the restricted space. As the face advanced timber pit props had to be put into position. The work was made difficult and hazardous by dust, poor light and in some seams by excessive water. In the deeper pits high temperatures added to the general unpleasantness. Added to this was the danger of a roof-fall, a danger which required constant vigilance from the miner. The adverse aspects of the miner's job were obvious and many, but the work did have some compensations; as Georg Werner, the chairman of the Overmans' Association noted in 1912, it made full use of a man's skill and intelligence:

"The miner's activity has this beauty to it: it is no routine work and with every action the intelligence can come into play. There are constantly occasions, in drilling, placing timber, clearing falls etc., where a good idea can save many hours of work. Such activity offers satisfaction...." 1

It would be naive to imagine that the satisfactions outweighed the evils of the miner's work; but it would be wrong to forget that they existed and formed part of the basis of the special pride which many miners felt about their work.

There was little impact from machines on the hewer's work before 1914. Various cutting machines, mainly British and American, were tried. But

---

they were large and unwieldy; many seams in the Ruhr were too steep and contorted for them, and the coal was frequently too soft. A further problem was said to be the general reluctance of many miners to adopt mechanized methods at all. The only significant advance was the adoption of the powered hand drill, (Abbauhammer). This was held by the miner, was powered by electricity or compressed air, and delivered up to a thousand blows a minute. It was first used for coal cutting in German mines in 1906, and although it eventually became the miner's main tool, as late as 1914 there were fewer than six hundred in use. Some disliked it because of the vibrations, which were thought to be harmful to health. Explosive retained its vital role in dislodging coal, and - together with pick and shovel - remained in the vast majority of cases the hewer's only tools. Apart from them he relied on sheer physical strength and dexterity.

Hewers always worked in teams, never alone. The size of the team varied, reaching up to around twenty men, though they were often quite small, not infrequently consisting of only two men. To some extent the predominance of small teams appears to have been the result of the absence of powered cutting machines, for until they were introduced in the 1920's there was

1. Schunder Tradition und Fortschritt p.91; Oberschuir Heranziehung pp.27-32; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.150.

2. Schunder Tradition und Fortschritt p.91; Oberschuir Heranziehung pp.32-33.


relatively little economic incentive to organize the work around a few long faces rather than a plethora of small ones; certainly the 1920's did see a rapid change to a small number of long faces in the Ruhr mines.\textsuperscript{1} Each team of hewers (Kameradschaft) had a leader, known as the Ortsälteste who was appointed by the mine management. In the case of a two-man team the Ortsälteste was a hewer, while his assistant would frequently be an apprentice hewer. The Ortsälteste was responsible for safety and the effective conduct of the work, and acted as spokesman for his team in discussions with management.\textsuperscript{2}

A minority of hewers could advance to other jobs. Some became specialists, exclusively concerned with shot-firing, or driving or maintaining the roadways. Some rose to become overmen (Steiger), a post of considerable social status in the district. Overmen supervised a number of faces, and were responsible to the management for achieving the desired output. Potential overmen did a two year part-time training course at one of the twenty-five mining institutes in the area. It was even possible for a miner to rise to become a pit manager (Betriebsführer).\textsuperscript{3} Such advancement was only possible, however, for a small minority. Most stayed as hewers until accident or failing strength forced them to leave work underground and to return to the surface for the final years of their working life.

2. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.21b.
3. Münz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.139. There can have been few, if any, of the completely illiterate and innumerate overmen who were found occasionally in the Durham pits: D. Douglass "The Durham Pitman" in Samuel (ed) Miners, Quarrymen and Saltworkers p.216.
Not all mine workers followed this career pattern. Some learned
different skills which kept them at the surface, working with the
machinery or in the brick-works which accompanied many mines. New
immigrants to the area could become an apprentice hewer immediately if
they were strong enough and demand for labour was high. Nevertheless,
this broad pattern was common to the great majority of miners.

The mining industry therefore differed from others in that the divisions
between the workers in it were for the most part the consequence of
differing age and physical strength, rather than due to a permanent
separation into "skilled" and "unskilled". The strength and dexterity
of the good miner, which enabled him to earn well in his best years,
declined with age and could not guarantee future high earnings. Nor
could strength and skills be passed on from father to son: it was
impossible for an elite of workers to maintain themselves and their sons
as a permanent "aristocracy" from which others could be excluded. This
pattern could and did create tensions between older experienced miners
and youngsters who through their greater physical strength could earn
considerable sums: it was alleged in 1890 that the young apprentice
hewers had lost their traditional respect for the older men with whom
they worked and from whom they were supposed to be learning their skills,

1. STAM, Frankfurter Zeitung 11.2.1912. Only a minority of immigrants
probably had previous experience of mine work, mainly in Upper Silesia.

2. The ability to pass on a privileged status from father to son has been
identified as one of the most important features of a "labour aristoc­

E.J. Hobsbawm "The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth Century Britain"
in Labouring Men (London, 1969 edition) p.273; Crew Industry and
Community pp.95-98. See also R. Samuel "Introduction" in Samuel (ed)
Miners, Quarrymen and Saltworkers p.xii.
and that their only concern was to boost their earnings as much as possible. But despite such frictions, the career structure meant that the expectations and experience of work was broadly common to the great majority of miners. It thus provided at least a basis for a sense of common fate, common interests and solidarity.

Social relations in the mines

As we have seen, the miners worked in teams, ranging from two men up to around twenty, the precise number depending on the size of the face being worked. The members of a team were entirely dependent on each other, both for their physical safety since a mistake by any one of them could cause a serious accident, and for their pay since this was based on the output of the entire team. Such a system of mutual inter­dependence could only function smoothly when the members of the team could trust each other. It is likely that friends tended to work together when possible and that outsiders were only accepted into a team under a certain amount of suspicion, until they had proved themselves personally acceptable to the existing members. Once working together, and assuming that there was no reason for antagonism, close personal relations were likely to grow up between colleagues. As has been noted with specific reference to miners in Yorkshire: "The team of colliers, with this system of mutual dependence, is the hub of the social structure of coalmining". The close relations within the team did not necessarily extend far beyond it: the members of one team

1. StAB, l62, Westfälische Volkszeitung 7.5.1890; see also StAB, l79 Amt Hofstede to KLB 31.7.1900.
2. Dennis et al Coal is our Life p.15.
might well be suspicious or even hostile towards other teams - if, for instance, they thought that the other team was taking undue safety risks, or threatened through excessive productivity to set off a wage reduction. They might, of course, equally well have good relations with other teams, but we should note that the mere fact of working together underground, while inducing a certain degree of mutual interdependence and solidarity between miners tended to focus this on the team itself. Except in moments of crisis - such as when an accident occurred - it did not necessarily lead to a marked diminution of the suspicions and divisions which were apparent above ground.¹

The miners could exercise a certain amount of control over their work. Continued and detailed supervision was impossible in a situation where the men were working in small groups at a number of faces with only a minimum of light. The overman was normally responsible for about 50 miners, though sometimes many more and might well manage to visit each face for which he was responsible only once or twice in the course of a shift.² Nevertheless, there were factors which ensured that the pressure was kept on the miners, despite the inability of the overman to exercise a detailed supervisory role. One was that the Ortsälteste was chosen not by the members of his team but by the overman. The Ortsälteste was usually paid slightly more than the other members of the

1. Tenfelde suggests that Poles and Masurians preferred where possible to work with compatriots: Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.221.

team and thus had something to lose if he was removed from the post; since he negotiated all agreements with the overman on behalf of his team - in fact if not in theory - we can take it that once an agreement had been reached he was personally concerned to ensure that its terms were fulfilled, if only to avoid any loss of credibility in later dealings. The wage system too was designed to keep the pressure on the miners: they were paid by the coal they produced rather than by the hours they worked. As we shall see, the miners - through the Ortsälteste - had some say in the negotiation of the rate at which they were to be paid for each truck of coal; and once a rate had been agreed they had in theory considerable latitude as to how much they actually produced. But in practice they had to ensure that they produced enough to give each member of the team a reasonable wage - without, on the other hand, producing so much that at the next renegotiation the rate would be cut. The overman might further try to stimulate his men to work by encouraging competition between one team and another, with rewards for higher output.¹ Thus despite the difficulties inherent in effectively supervising the miners at work, the overman and the mine management generally were able to ensure that they were kept under pressure to achieve a "satisfactory" output. It was only within these limits, in the area of detailed hour-by-hour decisions as to how precisely the various tasks were to be executed and their pace, that the miners had a real and important element of control over their work. Nevertheless, even this limited control did perhaps give some satisfaction, and a

¹. Hue Pergarbeiter II p.162.
certain self-confidence in their own skill and judgement, to many miners - at least in comparison with that found among pure production-line workers.¹

The most significant representative of management in the miner's life was the overman. He exercised very extensive power over the men under his direction, being himself responsible to the manager for securing the required output. He allocated the work to the various teams, and negotiated rates of pay - although his deals had to be ratified by senior management. He was responsible for the day to day supervision of the work, for regulating any overtime, and for the maintenance of discipline and safety precautions. The impact of the overman on the miner was thus very considerable. A man who made himself unpopular with his overman could find himself in trouble, being moved, for instance, to a coal face where there was little opportunity to earn good money. This happened to August Schmidt - later to be a leader - after he stayed away from work on May Day 1906; his pay fell from 6.50 to 4.75 marks a shift in consequence.² The importance of the overman was expressed in the miners' adage: "Der Kohlberg und der Steiger macht den Bergmann!"³

Relations between miners and overmen were frequently very bad. The overman's power and the fact that news came from him, even when the

¹. The importance of even a limited amount of "job control" to Durham miners is stressed in Douglass "The Durham Pitman" pp.211-220.
². Schmidt Lang war der Weg p.149.
policy originated further up the management hierarchy, meant that frustration and hostility were commonly focussed on him. It was alleged that overmen enjoyed cutting wages and disliked raising them. "Hatred" was a term sometimes used to describe the miners' feeling towards the overmen. Much of this, as the overmen's spokesmen claimed, may have been unfair: overmen were caught between senior management who decided general policy on wages, overtime, fines etc., but who compelled the overmen to enforce it, and the miners. Overmen were liable to lose their own job if they failed to carry through management policy efficiently, and it was the slump rather than a change in the personal attitudes of mine officials which led to a general sharpening of discipline and friction from the 1870's. Nevertheless, it was claimed that some pits preferred former NCO's for certain posts, and that a parade ground atmosphere sometimes prevailed. Indeed, Heinrich Imbusch, a Catholic miners' leader, maintained that conditions were even worse: "Apart from the fact that mine officials took absolutely no notice of the miners' feelings, some officials adopted a tone which is not even used on the parade ground. The miners were often ridiculed, mocked and insulted as they went about their work, and even now and then physically maltreated".¹

One particular practice which gave rise to considerable resentment was the system by which trucks which contained too much rock or were

insufficiently full were completely discounted from the tally of the team's total output when it came to calculating their wages, despite the coal which such trucks did in fact contain. This system - known as Nullen - was defended as necessary to ensure that the miners sent up only coal to the surface and did not simply ballast the trucks with rock. The value of the coal which the trucks did contain was commonly put towards a social benefit fund, rather than simply taken as profit by the mine, and it is doubtful whether the miners lost more overall under this system than under the suggested alternative of a system of fines. Nevertheless, the Nullen system caused considerable and bitter resentment between miners and officials, and its abolition was a commonly voiced demand. The main reason was the arbitrary power which the system put in the hands of management; since it was inevitable that some stone got into virtually every truck - particularly since the miners were working in semi-darkness and sometimes under considerable pressure to increase their output - and since it was also inevitable that trucks should lose some of their load in the knocks of the long journey from the coal face to the surface, the decision of the mine official to discount some trucks but not others often appeared to be essentially arbitrary. It was a power which the management could use as harshly or as leniently as it chose - but in either case with immediate effects on the miners' pay packets. In 1901 the Essen police commissar described Nullen as "very fashionable", and it was alleged that at a number of pits up to a quarter of some teams' output was being discounted.  

In 1892 the Berggesetznovelle gave the miners the right to appoint a checkweighman, who could watch over the actions of the official responsible for discounting trucks; but, unlike the parallel arrange-
ments in England, the checkweighman had to be paid by the miners, and none appear to have been appointed. Following the miners' strike of 1905 a further Berggesetznovelle abolished the Nullen system, and replaced it with a system of fines, with the proviso that no worker should be fined more than five marks a month; the truck was counted to the team's credit. Although such fines could bite just as hard into take-home pay and could be equally arbitrary in their incidence, the reform abolished a practice which had caused very considerable con-
lict, and had become "a symbol of arbitrariness and injustice".
There is certainly no sign that the system of financial deductions caused anything like as much conflict between management and miners.

Nevertheless, the abolition of Nullen did not mean an end to conflict. We shall see later in the chapter how deep-seated were the roots of conflict between overseers and miners over such issues as wages and the hours of work. And in addition to these large issues there were a multitude of apparently minor questions which could lead to mistrust and a sense of grievance. Despite the growing size and complexity of

1. Pieper Tage der Bergarbeiter pp. 97-98.
2. Münz Tage der Bergarbeiter p. 79.
the mines and the resulting changes in higher management structure, methods of enforcing work discipline and the resulting social relations between overmen and miners showed little fundamental change throughout the prewar period.\(^1\) Although conditions varied to some extent from mine to mine and at different times, we can fairly claim that relations were generally bad; and suggest that this in turn may have given the miners a certain sense of common identity through facing together an essentially hostile and arbitrary set of superiors.\(^2\)

There was only occasional contact between the miners and the senior managers and the mine owners themselves. In the mid-nineteenth century pits were generally small, with an average workforce of only around one hundred in 1860.\(^3\) In this situation it was easy for the employer to personally know his workers. The tradition of the identifiable individual as head of the firm persisted: some companies, like Krupp, continued to be purely family concerns; the majority, such as the Harpener Bergbau AG and the Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG, were owned by shareholders but were often managed by very prominent individuals - in these cases Robert Lüser and Emil Kirdorff - in a manner not very dissimilar to that of the private owners. As we have seen, many companies in the Ruhr tried to build up a sense of company loyalty through the provision of housing and related social benefits.

1. Spencer "Between Capital and Labour": p.189.

2. In 1901, the Essen police commissar considered that relations between lower mine officials and men were good at very few pits, and that the generally bad social relations were the most serious problem facing the mines. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.86.

3. Table 1.
Nevertheless, such policies could not obscure the fact that as the size of the mines increased it became less and less possible for any personal contact to take place between the individual miner and his employer. By 1890 the pits employed on average over seven hundred men, and the best that a pit manager could achieve was to visit each face once a month.\footnote{StAB, \textit{W}a5, Denkschrift über die Untersuchung p.11.} Even this became impossible as the mines grew: by 1900 the average size was 1,360 men, and by 1913 2,360. The growth affected long-established pits as well as the newer and deeper pits to the north of the area, where several thousand men might be employed.\footnote{Five mines to the south of Bochum which in 1864 employed on average 324 workers, in 1912 employed on average 1,850 workers. Groen "Studien" p.111.} And as the numbers of workers increased, there was a parallel concentration of ownership in fewer and fewer hands: in 1912 ninety per cent of the Ruhr mines were reported to be in the hands of eleven companies; of twenty-two mines around Bochum no fewer than eight belonged to the Harpener Bergbau AG.\footnote{STAK, Frankfurter Zeitung 11.2.1912; StAB, \textit{W}65.}

The growing size of the mining companies, and their distance from the individual miner, did not reduce their interest in paternalist provisions for their employees; indeed, as we saw in an earlier chapter, the trend was for an increasing provision of housing and other social benefits. The companies used such benefits to preserve loyalty and continue a policy of paternalist control in an industrial situation when this could no longer be maintained on a truly personal basis. In this they seem to have had some success. When we come to discuss the miners' protest
movements we shall see how politically conservative the great majority remained, and how reluctant they were to translate their undoubted and forcefully expressed grievances over the conditions of their employment into a radical critique of the economy and society in which they lived.

In many cases miners' perceptions of the mine in which they worked were divided: on the one hand there were the unpleasant overmen and junior officials with whom they came into daily contact and whose decisions could cause considerable hostility and protest; and on the other were the owners and senior managers, the Krupps, Musers and others, who seemed to be responsible not only for employment and the opportunity of relatively high earnings, but also for a range of social benefits and who showed at least apparent concern for the well-being of their employees. This is not to say that miners were incapable of perceiving the links between the different aspects of their situation; it was rather that for most of the time the two perceptions were in different compartments, so that it was possible to act on the basis of one perception without bringing into serious question the other.

As the real gap between the individual miner and his employer became wider, so this division between the miner's perceptions of the men under whom he worked became a more important buttress of the company's continued authority over him. Most of the evils of the mine could easily be blamed on overmen, while the responsibility of the wider entity, the company, was less obvious and lay hidden behind their much vaunted social conscience. It was easy for miners to concentrate on their immediate difficulties and not to worry too much about the deeper causes.
Health and Safety

Mine work has frequently aroused particular concern and sympathy for its practitioners in view of the dangers to which they are subjected. Although other trades matched its dangers when calculated as the risk to any given individual, mining was unique in the numbers of men subjected to a high degree of danger. And the sympathy has been strengthened by the horror which most people feel about the prospect of death deep below the ground. As we shall see, the dangers not only of sudden and dramatic death or injury but also of disease were a very real ingredient in the work experience of miners in the Ruhr before 1914.

The most dramatic and horrific danger to which the miner was exposed came from explosions. Firedamp ([Schlagwetter]) was one common cause. This was a mixture of methane, given off by some sorts of coal, and air which in the right proportions could be exploded by the slightest flame or spark. Firedamp was liable to accumulate in sheltered spots in the mine, and its lack of smell increased the danger. The answer was to achieve sufficient ventilation to prevent pockets of the mixture from accumulating, and to prevent any spark, particularly through the universal use of safety lamps. The second major cause of explosions was coal dust. There was, inevitably, a considerable amount of dry coal dust in mines, and in certain circumstances it was highly inflammable and explosive. The very ventilation which discouraged the accumulation of

1. Transport, building and dock-work were amongst the industries which experienced accident rates per employee which were higher than that of mining in 1907, but none of them employed anything like as many men as the mines; H. Letzner Die Soziale Fürsorge im Bergbau (Jena, 1911) pp.67; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.115.

firedamp helped to spread the dust around the pit. The answer was to damp down the coal trucks (in which much of the dust was generated) and as much as possible of the work faces and roadways by spraying water. Unfortunately, a considerable amount of water was necessary to have any appreciable effect, since much more water is necessary to saturate an atmosphere at the higher temperatures found underground, particularly in the deeper pits, than at the surface. Effective watering was therefore a difficult and expensive business.1

Firedamp and coal dust, either separately or together, accounted for the great bulk of explosions in the pits. Their effect depended on the particular circumstances at the time, and might vary from the fairly innocuous to the mass tragedy. In November 1889 a coal dust explosion at Constantin der Grosse killed fourteen miners and injured four.2 A firedamp explosion at Prinz von Preussen in 1895 killed thirty-eight men.3 An explosion at Carolinen Gluck in 1898 resulted in the deaths of 116 men and many injuries. It was alleged that firedamp had been allowed to accumulate in the pit, and that there were inadequate watering facilities.4 A firedamp explosion at Friedlicher Nachbar at two in the morning in April 1903 led to one death and four men injured.5 A firedamp explosion at Lothringen in 1912 killed 114 miners.6 These were just some of the explosions which occurred at mines near Bochum over the years. The

2. WKA, HKB Jahresbericht 1889.
worst explosion, however, took place at Radbod near Hamm (north-east of Dortmund) in November 1908: 348 men were killed and twenty-one injured in what was thought to be the worst industrial disaster which Germany had experienced. To appreciate the potential damage from explosions, it is perhaps worth recalling the disaster at Courrières in France in 1907, when a coal dust explosion caused 1,100 deaths.

Although dramatic and potentially catastrophic in their consequences, explosions caused only a minority of accidents in the mines. Considerably more accidents – both fatal and non-fatal – were caused by falls of rock and coal. These could occur in virtually any circumstances with fatal consequences to any man in the immediate vicinity. Effective prevention required comprehensive timbering of passages and work faces, and particularly in the earlier years this was commonly not done: the policy was rather to put up timber supports only where a specific danger was thought to be present. One particularly dangerous situation was that immediately following shot-firing to loosen coal: the shot might have resulted in a weakening of the roof, but the miners returned to the face virtually blinded by the dust in the air and could not watch for tell-tale signs. Rock falls were thought to be responsible for 45 per cent of all serious accidents in the Ruhr in 1885/6, but to have fallen to around a third by 1901. This compared with around 10 per cent of accidents caused by explosions. The relative fall in

1. ibid. p.638.
4. Ketzner Soziale Fürsorge pp.75-76; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.62-83; Neville "Courrières Colliery Disaster" p.49.
rock fall accidents was achieved partly by improved timbering, and partly by the custom of filling in exhausted workings.

Explosions and falls accounted for the bulk of accidents in the pits. Others were caused by any one of many factors: fire could break out; accidents could occur in the transit of coal and trucks around the pit and to the surface; as mechanization advanced an increasing number of accidents resulted from the inexpert use of machines and power tools. ¹ Whatever the causes, however, the particularly worrying feature was that the accident rate in German pits actually rose over the years. In 1886 the number of registered accidents stood at 65 per thousand insured mine-workers, but the rate rose fairly steadily to reach 100 per thousand workers in 1899 and 127 in 1906. The proportion of fatal accidents fell, from 2.55 per thousand insured workers in 1886 to 1.79 in 1906.² Nevertheless, the death rate in German mines was worse than that in other European countries: between 1897 and 1911 it averaged 2.21 per thousand, appreciably worse than that for France (1.52), the United Kingdom (1.32), Austria (1.28) and Belgium (1.03), but better than the United States (3.31).³ Within Germany the Ruhr was the most dangerous mining district: between 1891 and 1900 on average 2.73 per thousand miners died there, compared to 2.6 in Upper Silesia, 2.23 in the Aachen district, 1.8 in the Saar, and 1.47 in Lower Silesia. ⁴ The picture was thus very bleak in the Ruhr, not just in absolute terms but also by comparison with other countries and

¹ Mühl Lage der Bergarbeiter p.107; Imbusch Arbeitsverhältnis p.130.
² Imbusch Arbeitsverhältnis p.129; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.82.
³ Jevons British Coal Trade p.37k.
⁴ In 1901-1907 Upper Silesia had a slightly worse record than the Ruhr; these rates were based on the total of all mining workers, and the rates for underground workers alone would be higher. Ketzer Soziale Pflege p.70.
other parts of Germany.

There were a number of reasons for the poor safety record of the mines. One factor was the wages system, which, as we shall see later, was designed to encourage the miners to produce as much coal as possible, but gave no specific financial reward for timbering and other safety work. Another was the failure of the Government inspectors to enforce sufficiently effectively the legal safety requirements on the mines. This was partly the result of an insufficient number of inspectors to cope with the wide range of duties which were laid on them: they had to supervise not only aspects of the mine's activities relating to health and safety, but also its full technical activities.¹ The result was that many mines or particular parts of mines very rarely saw an inspector. In addition there was the problem that the personal contacts between inspectors and managers were too close: there was a recognized career progression from the Government service into private management, and many managers and inspectors thus had a common background, while inspectors sometimes aimed in time to move into management jobs. This was thought to encourage tip-offs of forthcoming inspections, enabling management to ensure that everything was in order before the inspector arrived. Parts of the mine where conditions were unsatisfactory might even be closed up and the inspector informed that they were no longer being worked.² Finally, workers might be reluctant to raise complaints with the inspectors, for fear of subsequent victimization by management.³

¹ Kirchhoff Sozialpolitik p.127.
² Ketzner Soziale Pflege p.86; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.143.
³ Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.87.
Two major accidents led to improvements to the mines inspection service. The Carolinenglück disaster of 1898 was blamed to a large extent on inadequate inspection of the pit, and in the following year the size of the inspectorate was increased. The Government considered, but finally rejected, the demand from the miners' unions for the appointment of workers' safety inspectors.¹ Workers' inspectors were already in existence in some other countries, and in Germany itself they were introduced in Bavarian mines in 1900 and in the Saar in 1902. The Radbod disaster of 1908 finally led the Government to insist on their introduction in the Ruhr. The safety officer (Sicherheitsmann) was elected by the men and had the right to inspect his part of the mine twice a month with the overman, and to make additional inspections at the request of either the management or workers' committee. The date and time of the inspection was left to him. He was paid by the mine, except for inspections made at the request of the workers' committee. In practice, however, the new post aroused little interest or enthusiasm from either the bulk of the miners or from managements, and made very little impact.²

A further important factor behind the high accident rates in the Ruhr pits was the presence of so many recent immigrants, and the high labour turnover which we have already noted.³ Many newcomers to the area had no experience of mining work but were put to work below ground virtually

3. See chapter 1.
immediately. Not surprisingly, they were liable to make mistakes, and fail to recognize danger signs. Foreigners and immigrants from the eastern provinces (many of them Polish speakers) were far more likely to suffer accidents than other miners: in 1905, for instance, 168 per thousand miners employed in the Ruhr were injured in accidents, but this concealed considerable differences between immigrants and others: the accident rate was 253 per thousand amongst foreigners, 195 per thousand amongst immigrants of German nationality (but mostly of Polish or Hasurian ethnic origins) and only 160 per thousand amongst other Germans. 1 In 1899 the Government introduced a requirement that workers should have a minimum knowledge of German so that they could understand their fellow workers and supervisors before they could be employed in the mines; certain posts were only to be held by those who could read German. The Government did not, however, accept the suggestion that all notices be translated into the main foreign languages in use in the Ruhr, and the attempt to enforce linguistic standards was bitterly resented by the Poles and other non-German speakers, who saw it as an attempt to discriminate against them by restricting their access to well paid jobs. The measure had little effect on the incidence of accidents. 2 The problem was accentuated by the widespread movement of miners from one mine to another within the Ruhr. Conditions frequently varied

1. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p. 82; Münst Lage der Bergarbeiter p. 102. The proportions were similar in other years. It was suggested by Georg Werner that the difference was largely due to the concentration of immigrants in more dangerous jobs and more dangerous pits: G. Werner Unfälle und Erkrankungen im Ruhrbergbau (Essen, 1910?).

2. Kirchhoff Sozialpolitik p. 130; Münst Lage der Bergarbeiter p. 102. In Breslau, in contrast to the Ruhr, safety notices were translated into Polish: Wehler "Polen in Ruhrgebiet" p. 453.
considerably between mines, and it took a man a certain time to learn the exact nature of the coal, the rock, the atmosphere and all the other factors which could contribute to an accident in a new pit. The Bochum area mines inspectorate commented in 1897 that accident rates were highest at pits with a high turnover of labour, while relatively stable pits such as Hannover and Hannibal were less affected by accidents.¹

Bad though the accident rate was in the Ruhr pits, miners ran an even greater risk of having their livelihood interrupted by illness. In 1905, when the number of men injured in accidents stood at 168 per thousand men employed, the number who lost three or more days from work through illness stood at 473 per thousand. The Ruhr was not untypical of German mining districts in the high rate of illness. Miners were, however, far more susceptible to disease than other workers: the level of injury and disease combined averaged only 390 per thousand for all German insured groups. The only industry comparable with mining in its sickness rate was the building industry.²

The high sickness rate in mining was to some extent a result of the general social conditions in which many miners lived, including the overcrowded accommodation which we noted in chapter 2. But many other groups of workers also lived in poor physical conditions; we must look to the particular conditions of work to explain the particular sickness

1. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.141.
2. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.83; Münz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.116; Metzner Soziale Fürsorge pp.92-93.
rates of the miners. One underlying factor was simply the physically demanding nature of the miner's work, and the generally weakening effect which months and years of it had on his strength and resistance to disease. Particularly when overtime was being worked, many miners were in a state of semi-permanent exhaustion, with only Sunday to recuperate. A second factor was the violent changes in temperature to which miners were subject. The temperature at the coal face was usually high—frequently well over 20 degrees—and this contrasted sharply with the temperatures in the main roadways, at the bottom of the shaft, and outside. The problem was exacerbated by damp: from the water in the mine and from his own sweat the miner and his clothes were soon damp or even soaked, and it was in these that he had to make his way back to the shaft at the end of the shift. Here he sometimes had to wait before being winched to the surface.\(^1\) The miner in the Ruhr did have the advantage over his British comrade that most pits did provide bathing facilities, so that he did not have to make his way home in his dirty and damp pit clothes.

These factors explain the generally weak physical condition in which many miners had to meet infections and other diseases. They also help explain the rheumatism and influenza which commonly afflicted them. Arthritis was encouraged by these factors, and by the pressure put on the hip by the position in which the miner had to work.\(^2\) Laryngitis was one common miners' disease.\(^3\) There were, however, some diseases

1. Münz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.119.
which were particularly concentrated amongst miners. One group - anthracosis, silicosis, other forms of pneumoconiosis, and emphysema - affected the lungs and breathing organs. These diseases, sometimes reinforced by TB and sometimes referred to as "black-spit" (Schwartzspucken), arose primarily from breathing in dust underground. Coal dust blackened the lungs and a man's spittle, but greater damage to the lungs was caused by the stone dust which accompanied it. The miner suffered from coughing and increasing difficulty with breathing. This limited his physical capacity and prevented him from undertaking the strenuous tasks involved in mining. In extreme cases breathing became virtually impossible, with death as the final result. ¹

Other common diseases - trachoma and nystagmus - affected the eyes and could lead to blindness. Trachoma was easily passed on, and in 1899 baths were banned from mines and had to be replaced with showers. ²

The most dramatic outbreak of disease came from the so-called "worm-disease" (Bauchkranckheit - ancylostomiasis, or human hook-worm) which swept the Ruhr pits in the early 1900's. The adult worms live in the human small intestine, and lay eggs which are passed in the faeces. The larvae first live free in the soil, but later penetrate human skin if this is available, or are swallowed and migrate to the intestine via the lungs. The disease is prevalent in tropical countries, requiring fairly high temperatures, considerable moisture and poor sanitary conditions to spread. It spread to Italy, and then - spread partly by

¹. For a vivid description of the effects of silicosis (probably combined with TB), see Coombes These Poor Hands pp.232-238.

². Münz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.121.
the workers employed in building the St. Gotthard tunnel - to Hungary, Belgium and France, and finally to Germany. Conditions in many mines were well suited to the disease, combining moisture, warmth and inadequate sanitation with many semi-dressed men. It was only in response to the outbreak of the disease that the mines began to take seriously the problem of underground sanitation: the traditional method was to provide a number of wooden tubs, but the number was often quite inadequate for the work-force; they were situated too far from the work face, and were infrequently emptied. The result was that many men did not use them at all but instead sought a quiet place near their work to relieve themselves. Another problem was the absence of drinking water. Miners usually took around three litres of diluted coffee with them to drink, but in hot areas this was not always sufficient and they resorted to the impure water provided for damping down dust.1

The symptoms of the "worm disease" were described by a contemporary: "sallow and pale face, buzzing in the ears, shortage of breath, dull eyes, pale or white inner sides of the eyelids, swelling of the feet, diarrhoea and loss of appetite, general tiredness, dilation of the heart and finally a craving for water".2 The symptoms usually took three to four weeks to appear. Death was the result only in extreme cases.

1. IWM, K2 213; Hünz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.122.
The first recorded case of the disease in the Ruhr area occurred in 1886, and there was a second in 1892. Between 1896 and 1899 there were around a hundred each year, in 1901 and 1902 between one and two thousand, and in 1903 no less than 29,374 cases (or over 11 per cent of the total work force).\(^1\) This dramatic outbreak stimulated the authorities to undertake checks to determine how many men were affected by the disease (for it was possible to carry it without showing symptoms); checks at a number of pits showed that at some of them (Graf Schwerin and Erin) up to three quarters of the workers were affected.\(^2\)

The authorities took vigorous action: they insisted that no new miner could be taken on without a medical examination; and large numbers of men were obliged to undergo "cures" of one to two weeks. This caused great discontent amongst the miners, partly because carriers who did not themselves feel at all ill had to undergo the cure, partly because the cure could be exhausting and dangerous - there were cases of men who were blinded and died on them - and sometimes had to be repeated, but mainly because of the financial cost involved. No compensation was given for the first three days of lost pay as a result of having to attend the cure, and for the rest the compensation only amounted to around a quarter of the normal wage. If the cure had to be repeated the family could get into serious financial difficulties. By the end of 1903, in fact, many mines were beginning to make a greater contribution to the medical costs and were providing their employees with special compensation to bring up

---

1. WAA, K2 213; Koch *Persarbeiterbewegung* p.84.
2. WAA, K2 213.
their benefit to average wage levels, and this action helped to reduce the discontent. ¹

Other measures were taken to improve the sanitary conditions in the pits. The old wooden toilets were replaced with iron ones, and attempts were made to increase their number, accessibility and the frequency with which they were emptied, and cleaned. The Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG tried to encourage their miners to use the toilets at the surface before starting the shift - with what success is not recorded.² Attempts were made to provide the miners with clean drinking water: at Julius Philipp, however, there were protests when the men were charged 10 pfennigs for a half litre of water, deductible from wages.³ Nevertheless, the measures were effective: the number of cases fell from over 29,000 in 1903 to nearly 11,000 in 1904 and 5,000 in 1905. By 1906 the disease was concentrated at a few particularly badly affected pits, and was effectively eliminated from the great bulk of Ruhr pits.⁴

Accidents and disease were thus a major ingredient of the miner's lot. In a very real and immediately perceived sense every day that he entered the pit could well prove his last, and even if he was not killed outright at his work the injuries he was liable to suffer, the dust he breathed in and the diseases he was subjected to combined to undermine his health and shorten his life expectation. The average age of invalidity in all Prussian mines dropped from over 53 years in the 1860's

¹. StAB, h64 Polizei-Commissar Bochum to RPA 27.7.1903; StAB, h80 RPA to Minister des Innern 8.12.1903.
². TMA, K2 213.
³. IZF, Bergarbeiter Zeitung 13.6.1903.
⁴. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.84; Fänz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.125.
Miners were generally finished by their mid-forties - "at an age at which other groups of workers are virtually still at full strength". The miner suffered in two ways: one was his actual growing incapacity, the fact that he could do less and less, and ultimately his premature death. Almost as serious, however, was the impact of incapacity on his earnings. It was the loss of earnings rather than the insanitary conditions which caused the disease, which aroused most protest over the worm disease. Even a fairly minor injury or illness could mean dire financial consequences for the miner's family, not just in an immediate loss of earnings, but over the succeeding years if the man was left to any significant degree weaker as a result of his mishap.

Miners were somewhat better provided with insurance cover than many other workers in Germany. The Knappschaft, the insurance organisation for the mining industry in the area, dated from 1767, and even by the beginning of the twentieth century - by which time some social security provisions had been extended to other groups of workers - it still offered many facilities which compared very favourably with those available to other workers: miners, for instance, were better able to get help with special assistance in case of particular need, cheap loans, help for school children, provision of wash-houses etc., than were other workers. Nevertheless, in the basic social security provisions open to

1. Metzner Soziale Fürsorge p.97; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter pp.15-16.
2. R. Schneider Die Entwicklung des niederrhein.-westfälischen Bergbaus und der Eisen-Industrie (Pochum, 1899) p.31.
them the miners were no longer the privileged group they had been early in the nineteenth century.¹

In theory at least the Knappschaft was financed and managed jointly by employers and workers. Both contributed to it and both were represented on its board. In practice, however, the organisation was dominated by the employers and it was the focus of continuing complaints and disputes. Until 1908 three-quarters of the financial contributions came from the workers, whose representatives nevertheless only had half the seats on the board. In 1908 the employers' contributions were raised to match those of the workers. At the same time the indirect elections through which the workers' representatives (known as "Älteste") were chosen were replaced by a more direct system with the aim of giving the miners a more effective voice in their selection. In practice, however, the employers continued to exercise considerable influence over the workers' representatives, through their latent ability to discipline them or sack them from their jobs.²

The Knappschaft's main function was the provision of medical facilities and sickness and invalidity benefits. The benefit a man received depended on his contribution record, but after 1908 stood at around half the level of average wages.³ This was probably sufficient to avoid

¹. Ketzner Soziale Fürsorge p.117; until the reforms of the 1850's the Knappschaft had been much more than an insurance body, and had fulfilled a range of social functions; Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.90-98, 282-291.

². Ketzner Soziale Fürsorge pp.111-112.

³. ibid. p.110; Münz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.127.
extreme destitution, but certainly not enough to prevent a severe drop in living standards for a man and his family if he was prevented from working for any length of time. It represented but a modest cushion against the threat of injury or sickness.

Job security and hours of work

A matter of fundamental interest to any worker is his security of employment. This was particularly the case in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when no effective system of unemployment benefit existed. Under the tight state regulation of the mines which lasted until the 1860's the miners had received considerable protection against the threat of dismissal. The liberal reforms of 1860 and 1865 replaced this with the concept of the work contract, freely entered into by employer and employee, and terminable by either after just two weeks' notice. This immediately made miners vulnerable to the loss of their employment, should the economic situation or their personal conduct persuade the employer that this was in his best interests.

Luckily for the miners, the long-term trend in the industry was to sustained expansion, with the resultant sustained demand for labour. We have already noted the enormous expansion of the total mining labour force in the half century before the outbreak of war. So long as this expansion was maintained unemployment could only pose a relatively marginal problem, affecting individuals rather than large groups of

1. W. Fischer Die Bedeutung der preussischen Bergrechtsreform (1851-1865) für den industriellen Ausbau des Ruhrgebiets (Dortmund, 1961); Kirchhoff Sozialpolitik chapter 1; Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.262-263.
workers. The long-term trend concealed, however, important cyclical fluctuations of varying severity, and it was during these cyclical downswings that unemployment could suddenly become a real possibility for the miner. The worst depression was that of the 1870's and early 1880's when demand for industrial products and coal collapsed, and with it the demand for labour. Some pits cut their labour force dramatically: in Bochum the Präsident pit which employed 2,100 men in 1874 reduced this to only 1,085 in the next year.\(^1\) This appears to have been rather exceptional in its severity: the Bochum Chamber of Commerce estimated that in 1875 the mines in its area employed 32,789 men; by 1877 the number had fallen to 31,215 but by 1878 had risen again to 32,150.\(^2\) In the Ruhr as a whole the number of miners fell from 83,832 in 1875 to 73,725 in 1877.\(^3\) In 1877 it was estimated that around ten thousand Ruhr miners were unemployed.\(^4\) The problem was accentuated by the continued immigration into the area, and poverty became more acute. The number of families dependent on official poor relief in Bochum increased from 100 in 1874 to 328 in 1881.\(^5\)

The depression of the 1870's gradually lifted in the following years, and the mining industry resumed its rapid growth. The later cyclical downturns were nothing like as drastic or prolonged as the depression of the 1870's and posed less of a threat to miners' jobs. Never after 1887

1. StAB, HKB Jahresberichte.
2. ibid.
4. ibid.
5. StAB, HKB Jahresberichte.
was there an actual fall in the number of miners employed. The worst setbacks were in 1902, when the number of miners employed showed no increase on the previous year, and 1913 when the increase consisted of only a few hundred. In both years unemployment did cause appreciable concern. As early as October 1900 the socialist Volksblatt reported:

"Sackings, restrictions, wage reductions: that is the present tune in the Rhineland and Westphalian industrial area. All the attempts of the industrialists' press to pacify, reassure or even deny them cannot alter the daily multiplying facts". 2

In the following summer the situation was still bad: "Free shifts, sackings and wage restrictions take place every day, now in the town [Bochum], now in the surrounding area, so that we are not able to report them all", declared the paper in July, 1901. 3 In 1902 the Bochum Chamber of Commerce reported:

"The condition of the labour market has worsened since last autumn, following the decline in almost every branch of industry in our district, mainly due to the lack of domestic demand. The number of workers in most industrial works has consequently declined, frequent free shifts have been introduced, and sometimes the hours of work cut. The reduction in the number of workers has not happened suddenly, but has been spread fairly evenly over the months of the current year and has continued up to the present". 4

The Chamber of Commerce estimated that some pits had cut their labour force by up to ten per cent, though this was offset by others which had not; the Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG reduced its labour force by only two per cent. Much of the reduction was being achieved by natural wastage:

1. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.139;
2. IZF, Volksblatt 18.10.1900.
3. IZF, Volksblatt 15.6.1901.
4. WJA, K2 857 HKB to RPA 27.9.1902.
"With the fall in workers' incomes many have left of their own free will, particularly in the mining and metal industries, and have gone to seek better paid work elsewhere. Many miners have found this at the many new pits to the north. Many people have as usual returned to their homes to help on the farms. Real unemployment does not yet exist in the area, since the redundant workers have mostly left the district. We also do not believe that large scale unemployment will appear in the winter; it may nevertheless be for consideration whether measures against unemployment should be taken now". 1

In 1903, however, the demand for industrial goods and with it for coal and miners, picked up and the problem of unemployment disappeared.

Jobs in the pits were threatened again in 1908, when the boom ended. The Volksblatt once again contained reports of wage reductions, short-time and layoffs. In the autumn the Ministry of the Interior issued a circular to local officials, noting that the labour market had "shown somewhat unsatisfactory trend in the last months" and urging them to use their influence to prevent further unemployment. 2 Nevertheless, this recession, and the one in 1913 which also produced further expressions of concern, were fairly short-lived and were not marked by prolonged or widespread unemployment amongst Ruhr miners. 3

The main reason for the fairly low incidence of unemployment in the years after the 1880's was the sustained expansion of the mining industry.

1. ibid. Laid off metal workers were also reported to have returned home, "to help with harvest work". LWA, K2 857, Gelsenkirchener Gussstahl- und Eisenwerke to HKB 20.9.1902.

2. IISG, Volksblatt; StAB, h31 Minister des Innern, Berlin, to RPA 2.11.1908.

3. WWA, K2 923, HKB to RPA 27.10.1913. Again, some unemployed miners left the region and returned to their home: in 1908 unemployed Ruhr miners were being hired in Upper Silesia. Schofer Formation of a modern labor force p.128.
The cyclical downturns which interrupted this long-term trend were relatively short-lived. Since the main problem facing the mines was in fact to secure and retain a labour force sufficient to fully exploit the expanding market, they were reluctant to part with workers, even when in the short term they constituted a net cost to the company. The mines tended, therefore, to react to falls in the demand for coal by cutting back the number of shifts worked, ending overtime, and re-deploying men from coal cutting to maintenance and safety work. These measures, combined with cuts in wage rates, substantially reduced labour costs without actually laying off men - and thus threatening the company's position when the slump ended. It was usually only after such methods had been tried that the mines turned to more drastic action. Thus the management of Friedrich der Grosse, who had expanded their labour force from 2,744 men in 1906 to 4,076 in 1907 allowed it to continue to rise in 1908 to 4,815 despite their need to reduce operations: they were hoping that the recession of that year would be transient, and it was only after some months that they started to reduce the numbers employed:

"Since at the beginning of the year 1908 market conditions were not foreseeable, we thought it right at first to retain the work force which we had assembled with great sacrifices, by the introduction of free i.e. unworked shifts. But by the end of the year, when every hope of an improvement in demand had disappeared, in order to bring production as far as possible into relation with demand, we found ourselves faced with the necessity of starting with a reduction of the work force". 1

The Chamber of Commerce noted in 1913 that even if the recession worsened, they did not expect substantial redundancies:

1. BA, 14/24 Geschäftsbericht of Gewerkschaft Friedrich der Grosse 1908. Nevertheless, the Volksblatt reported in March 1908 that 86 men from Friedrich der Grosse had been given notice. It may be that the report was inaccurate, or that the notice was withdrawn. IISG, Volksblatt 17.3.1908.
"The mines themselves have a considerable interest in maintaining in bad times too the work force (Arbeiterstamm) which they have brought together at considerable cost. The mines use times of poor demand to start more stone work /\*preparatory operations\*/ or to put more manpower into it, so that the men set free from coal production can be used here. In addition the mines will try to maintain their operations at about the existing level by stockpiling coal and coke. Both methods have already been started here and there". 1

There were complaints that the mines did not go far enough in arranging the work in such a manner as to keep men employed through recessions. Heinrich Imbusch, a Catholic miners' leader, conceded that there were difficulties in stock-piling large amounts of coal; but he felt that there was considerably greater scope for concentrating preparatory work in periods of recession:

"During booms one could then employ virtually the entire work force on coal production. A powerful jump in the production figures would naturally be the result. Some managements have already worked in this way. But there remains a great deal more that could be done in this direction". 2

A further factor limiting the impact of cyclical booms and slumps on the coal industry, and thus helping to preserve jobs during downswings, was the existence of the coal syndicate. This organisation, set up in 1893 and including in its membership nearly all the Ruhr mining companies, exercised some control over the industry by imposing quotas on each company. This prevented the kind of extreme competition between mines which would have encouraged the less economic to sack large numbers of workers during recessions. In 1901 the Bochum Landrat noted that the effects of the recession were at least modified through this means:

1. Wü, K2 923, HKB to RPA 27.10.1913; see also Wü, K2 857, HKB to RPA 27.9.1902.

2. Imbusch Arbeitsverhältnis pp.75-76; see also Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.82.
"The coal syndicate's sticking to its long-term agreement has had the good result that the working class has not been hit too suddenly by the ending of the boom. There has been a quite gradual shake-out of labour in such a manner that at first the unpeaceful and inefficient elements have been dismissed. The works which are concerned to preserve their skilled labour force have helped by introducing free shifts and short-time. Thus there is as yet no major shortage of work; redundancies on a large scale have not yet taken place, and are not expected in the near future". 1

The coal syndicate was frequently the subject of attack: Dr. Pieper blamed much of the unemployment of 1902 on the syndicate's price-fixing policy, and claimed that if prices had been reduced output and employment would not have slumped so badly. 2 Nevertheless, Otto Hue, one of the leading social democrats and miners' leaders in the district, gave it public support for the generally moderating effect which it exerted on the industry's cyclical fluctuations. 3

While the pit managers generally tried to retain their workers during recessions, they did not hesitate to dispense with the services of those they felt to be "unpeaceful and inefficient". These were often identified as union members and "agitators". The mines inspector for the Witten district commented in 1901: "Here and there the economic recession is used by managements to rid their labour force of those who have become troublesome through agitation, or those notable for their unruliness". 4

Men were sometimes encouraged to resign by a tightening up of discipline: in 1901 at Baaker Mulde and Präsident the fines and punishments for infringements of work discipline were suddenly much more

---

1. STAM, RA I 1485, KLB to RPA 19.11.1901.
2. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.83.
3. StAB, h80, RPA to Minister des Innern 8.12.1903; F. Mariaux Gedenkwort zum 100 jährigen Bestehen der Harpener Bergbau AG (Dortmund, 1956) p.278; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.78; see also StAB, Magistrats Bericht 1907 p.36.
4. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.89.
toughly enforced. The Volksblatt commented:

"At many works regular free shifts have been introduced to avoid having to sack workers. Other managements resort to such objectionable methods as excessive wage cuts, harsh punishments, bad treatment of the men, etc., to encourage the workers to give notice themselves. Thus at many works, especially mines, many workers leave of their own accord, despite the poor chance of finding work elsewhere". 1

Unemployment thus remained a distinct possibility for individuals, even when the general policy of managements was to retain the core of their labour force. Workers were, no doubt, aware that it was most likely to affect them if they caused trouble to management. There was also a certain amount of seasonal unemployment: demand for coal was higher in the winter than in the summer, and while this was accommodated to some extent by overtime working during the winter months, men were sometimes taken on in the autumn and laid off in the spring. 2 Nevertheless, for the great majority of miners unemployment was a relatively marginal problem. As one commentator noted in 1909: "Thanks to the extraordinarily favourable development of the Ruhr mining industry one cannot speak of an insecurity in the Ruhr miner's existence in the last decades, or in the foreseeable future; a fact which is not to be found in any other industry". 3

The converse side of the sustained expansion of the industry and the demand for labour was, however, considerable pressure on the miners over the hours which they were expected to work. The question of the hours of work had three aspects: one was the length of the basic normal shift, the second was the number of such shifts being worked, and the third was the problem of overtime on top of the ordinary shifts. All these

1. IZF, Volksblatt 25.7.1901.
2. StAB, h62, Zeche Julius Philipp to KLB 20.6.1890.
aspects came together and posed particularly acute problems during economic upswings, when the mines could sell every ton of coal they could produce.

The normal shift was usually eight hours long, enabling the day to be divided into three: the morning shift generally started at 6.00 a.m., the afternoon shift at 2.00 p.m., and the small night shift at 10.00 p.m. Most of the men worked on the morning or afternoon shifts, while the night shift was used primarily for preparatory and repair work. The eight-hour shift dated back to the eighteenth century and was one of the miners' most cherished heritages. Surface workers, and workers in other industries in the Ruhr normally had appreciably longer shifts: as late as 1905 the shifts in the metal industry in and around Bochum varied between ten and eleven and a half hours, though ten hours was becoming the norm. ¹ The miners' eight-hour shift was under challenge even before the economic liberalization of the 1860's, which enabled employers to determine the hours of work. Some employers did indeed lengthen the shift: in 1889 many pits had basic shifts of slightly over eight hours, though others had slightly shorter ones.² Nevertheless, eight hours did generally continue as the normal shift length; employers found short-time or overtime to be more flexible methods of responding to a need to reduce or increase production.

This did not mean, however, that the length of the basic shift was not the cause of considerable controversy. As the mines expanded,

1. WMA, K2 7h1.

becoming deeper and much longer underground, the question of exactly what the eight hours should cover became more and more contentious. Journey time - the time it took the miner to get from the top of the shaft to his actual workplace underground, and back again at the end of the shift - became longer, so that as early as the late 1880's it was taking up to an hour each way at some pits.\footnote{StAB, hh2; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.38.} Moving underground was physically tiring: the passages were often narrow with low roofs and timbers below which the miner had to duck. They could also be wet and slippery, and in the poor light it was difficult to keep an adequate watch for obstacles. The men commonly had to carry with them their tools and a timber prop on their way to the face. Thus any extension of journey time was an addition to the physical toll of the miner's day. The larger numbers of men going in and out of the pits also created bottlenecks and delays at the pit-head. Franz Hoffeld recounted in his memoirs of the 1880's how at one pit where he worked the men were supposed to be winched down between 5.30 and 6.00 a.m., but because of the numbers it was necessary to be in line by 5.00 a.m., to get to the face on time: lateness led to ill-treatment from the overman.\footnote{F. Hoffeld Bilder aus dem Bergmannsleben (Dortmund, n.d.) p.13.} A further problem was that the increasingly deep pits meant that the temperature at the face was higher, so that an eight-hour shift became physically more exhausting. The increasing size and depth of the mines thus meant that the working day - even with the same number of hours of actual work - tended to increase and become less supportable. Argument centred, therefore, around the exact interpretation of the eight hours: the employers argued that it meant eight hours actually at the
work face, while the miners claimed that it should represent eight hours underground, including the time necessary to get between the pit-head and the face. As we shall see in the next chapter, the issue was a central one in a great many of the disputes between management and men: although the Government was eventually induced to intervene on the issue, the conflict over the interpretation of the eight-hour shift was far from settled by 1911.

The issue became particularly pressing during economic upswings, since during recessions, as we have seen, the employers were happy to reduce hours. But the pressure on hours of work during upswings had other elements. One was the increasing number of shifts worked. Hewers and hauliers worked on average 288 shifts during the recession year of 1902, but the number rose to 315 and 313 in the boom years of 1906 and 1907.\(^1\) Closely associated with extra shifts was the custom of working overtime at the end of the normal shift. Normally this would take the form of an additional quarter shift (i.e. two hours), but it could consist of anything up to a full double shift. In theory overtime (which was not paid for at a higher rate) was purely voluntary, and men had the right to refuse it, but in practice considerable pressure was exerted on them. Some men may have welcomed the chance to increase their earnings, but many disliked the system, both because of the immediate physical exhaustion it entailed, and because they considered that it tended to depress wages for the normal shift. At the enquiry following the 1889

\(^1\) Münz Lage der Arbeiter p.55.
strike, the Neu Iserlohn miners' spokesman called for "reasonable earnings without overtime". Management, however, normally regarded overtime as essential to ensure adequate output during booms. Unfortunately, to provide full cover for overheads it was necessary to have as many men as possible staying on to work the additional shift; and to secure the greatest efficiency and facilitate the book-keeping it was desirable to keep the existing teams of miners together and working in their stalls, rather than put together new combinations. The management of Unser Fritz commented in 1889 that only "general" overtime - i.e. overtime when all the men worked - was of any value.

The mines inspector for the south Dortmund district reported in 1899:

"Overtime shifts to secure greater production are best both for the workers and for the mine when they last two or four hours; this, however, is only possible when there is general participation, since otherwise the winding equipment which has to be kept running is too expensive. It is therefore vital that the labour force is willing to do the overtime, and that they are additionally satisfied with two or four hours. This is generally the case at the southern mines with an established and settled labour force; at the new northern pits with their corresponding labour force general participation is hard to achieve. The workers there are also more in favour of 6-hour overtime shifts, reasoning that if they are to bear the unpleasantness of a long period of work at all, this unpleasantness must at least be as concentrated and as profitable as possible."

In an attempt to secure the greatest possible participation in overtime managements commonly exerted considerable pressure on miners. Sometimes they were required to register a day in advance with the overman if they

1. StAB, Ith2; Münz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.51; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.53; StAB, Ith5 Denkschrift über die Untersuchung p.9.
2. StAB, Ith2.
3. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.50.
did not want to work overtime; complaints about this from men at Friedrich der Grosse in 1889 drew the management response that it was necessary "for the maintenance of order".¹ Men who had not registered by the specified time were not uncommonly prevented from leaving the pit until the overtime was completed: the 1889 enquiry heard complaints about this from men at a number of mines, and at Centrum it was conceded that this was the practice: "Agreed; done to achieve higher production".² One incident at the Vereinigte Wallfisch pit in June 1889 illustrates the difficulties which could arise: on Thursday the management issued a notice announcing that the next day's morning shift would continue for an additional two hours, and that anyone not wanting to do this should register with the overman. Eight men registered, and when the basic shift ended next day at 1 o'clock they, and apparently a few others who had arrived at the shaft, were allowed out. But other men decided that the air was bad and that they had had enough, and left their stalls too - apparently at their normal time. By the time that they reached the shaft, however, they found that the winding of coal trucks had been resumed and that they would not be able to go to the surface until 3 o'clock; "wet through with sweat", they had to wait at the draughty pit bottom for two hours. In his report on the incident (prompted by complaints from the men) the mines inspector commented that the management had been "thoroughly correct" in its actions, and had followed the "general custom".³

Overt pressure on the men to work overtime continued in later years. In

1. StAB, h12.
2. ibid; Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.267.
3. StAB, h39.
1899 men at Präsident were being fined for failing to work overtime without having registered with the overman. In April 1900 we hear of three miners at Vollmond who had their pay cut after leaving at the end of eight hours without permission. In 1905, as the largest strike in the Ruhr was about to begin, Dr. Pieper reported:

"It should not be denied that overtime shifts can sometimes be necessary nor that individual workers themselves volunteer to do them from a desire for higher wages because of family concerns, to make up lost shifts or lost wages resulting from illness, fines, deductions etc., or for other reasons. In most cases, however, overtime is done because of direct or indirect pressure from the mine owner or his officials, to utilize the favourable economic conditions or to make economies (by having a smaller workforce and burdening them with overtime) etc. One frequently reads in the miners' press: 'Those who refuse overtime get reduced wages and worse places of work!'"

At the height of the boom of 1906 and 1907, when labour was in demand and wages were high, many miners simply refused to work the overtime demanded: The Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG complained that this was a factor behind the coal shortage; in April 1907 a miners' meeting at Shamrock III/IV voted unanimously not to work any further overtime, and not to co-operate with any foreign workers who the management might bring in to work the extra shifts.

Economic upswings were thus accompanied by considerable pressure on the length of the working day, particularly through an increase in the number of shifts and an increase in overtime. Discontent also mounted

1. Imbusch Arbeitsverhältnis p.68.
2. IZF, Volksblatt 19.4.1900.

h. Glückauf 23.3.1907; STAM, Landratsamt Gelsenkirchen hO, Polizei Eickel report 29.4.1907.
amongst miners who felt that they should be able to earn an adequate wage without having to stay longer than eight hours underground.

Ironically, when booms were at their height and all the pits were working flat out production was sometimes disrupted by shortages of railway trucks to dispose of the coal, and men had to be sent home. Such interruptions were, however, the exception: the crucial feature of booms was the mounting pressure on men to work longer and longer hours, and their growing resistance to it.

Holidays and absenteeism

The normal working week in the pits was six days, and during booms when overtime was being worked the miners had little time to call their own. Nor did they have much relief from the pressure of work through official holidays. There were a number of religious festivals which would involve a day off for Catholics or Protestants or both, although the employers might try to arrange for work to continue if the economic conditions were favourable. Employers did allow men to take holidays: but there was no entitlement and no wages were paid. In 1907 the concept of the annual paid holiday was introduced into the Prussian state-owned mines, but there were few of these in the Ruhr and the idea was not

1. StAB, HKB Jahrestichten 1899, 1907; Pünz Lage der Bergarbeiter pp.56-57; Schofer Formation of a modern labor force p.9


3. Pünz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.58.
imitated by the private mines. There were occasional suggestions that paid holidays be introduced - the workers' committee at Dannenbaum II requested it in 1909 - but a survey in 1910 by the Bochum Chamber of Commerce revealed that the breweries were the only local industry which had introduced paid holidays for workers (although some industries did provide them for more senior employees) in any systematic way. Even in the brewing industry, however, it had been introduced against much opposition: the Schlegel Brauerei argued that other employers should resist the introduction of paid holidays as long as possible, and that only workers who were "industrious and work in the interests of the business" should receive them. The first private mine to introduce paid holidays for underground miners was Amalie, near Essen, in 1912: men who were aged thirty and had worked for five years consecutively were given five days a year off with pay. But the custom of granting paid holidays only became at all widespread after the war.

Although miners could get some relief from work through unpaid agreed leave, this could not necessarily be obtained when they wanted it. They sometimes resorted, therefore, to more informal methods of avoiding what were felt to be excessive demands on them. If a man wanted time off and at least some continuing income and had plausible symptoms he might plead sickness. Since the doctors were appointed by the colliery rather than by the men themselves and since in any case there was no sick-

ness benefit payable for the first days of illness, it is doubtful whether many men who were not really ill to some significant degree in fact effectively feigned illness; but an increased willingness to sign on sick in borderline cases may at least partly explain (although there may have been medical factors here too) the fact that dry and sunny periods saw the highest sickness rates, and that August was the worst month for illness. ¹

It was generally simpler, however, just to stay away from work for a day or two. The penalty was greater as well, since in addition to the loss of wages an absentee could be fined if he missed a shift without permission. Nevertheless the habit of extending the week-end was common enough for the first day of the week to be popularly known as "blue Monday", and pay days (which occurred twice monthly) and public holidays were also generally followed by widespread absenteeism. ² A certain amount of absenteeism of this sort took place at all times, whatever the state of trade. During recessions, when money was tight, the hours of work in any case reduced, and when a real threat to the individual's job existed, absenteeism did not pose too great a problem, partly because the men did not stay away so much, and partly because the management was often not unhappy with it: it both reduced production and could be used as an excuse to dispense with unwanted labour. But as the trade cycle improved the problem became more acute. Longer hours and

¹. Menz Lage der Bergarbeiter pp.117-118.

². Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.54; StAB, 1145 Denkschrift über die Untersuchung p.13.
better earnings made men physically more tired and under less pressure from need (and perhaps from their wives) to earn every mark they could; the growing demand for labour also made them less nervous at the prospect of losing their existing job. More men were therefore willing to trade in some of their better earning power for at least some leisure, or at least felt that any earnings lost at the beginning of the week could be recouped by some hard work later on. It was consequently in boom years that most of the complaints from employers are heard. In 1899 the Bochum Chamber of Commerce pointed out "in the workers' interest" that the miners were not fully exploiting the boom, both by letting productivity drop and by staying away from work on Mondays and after pay days: this behaviour demonstrated "the great economic immaturity of a substantial proportion of our working population". 1 The official Zeitschrift für das Berbau-, Hütten-, und Salinenwesen noted that in the boom years of 1906 and 1907 (and to some extent in 1908 too) the number of shifts missed through absenteeism rose, but that when the boom ended in 1909 and 1910 it fell. 2 Absenteeism, of course, is a commonly remarked feature of mining life, not just in Germany: in "Ashton" in Yorkshire, for instance, it was normal in the 1940's for men to miss one or two shifts per fortnight, usually on Monday. 3 It is not hard to understand why men should be reluctant to leave home for the pit. The custom also reflected the tendency of some (but by no means all)

1. StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1899.
3. Dennis et al Coal is our Life p.185; see also the discussion in Schofer Formation of a modern labor force pp.131-136.
miners to live from hand to mouth on a very short-tern basis: the uncertainties and dangers of the pit, combined with the changing economic conditions which meant that money could be flush at one moment but short the next, induced a certain fatalism and an unwillingness to look beyond the immediate situation. We will be looking further at the uncertainties surrounding miners' earnings in the next section, but should note here that they formed an important underpinning to the custom of missing shifts: if there was in general no point in looking beyond the most pressing and immediate needs, there was no particular reason to bother to turn out for work so long as cash was still to hand. The next month could look after itself.¹

Wages

Work in the pits was hard, dangerous and unpleasant. The only important motivation to do it was the earnings it produced, and this was naturally a central concern of miners. As we shall see when we come to look at the history of strikes, money was central to the great majority of them. Many disputes were closely related to the specific wages system used in the mining industry.

Wages were calculated in differing ways for different categories of workers. Those not directly involved in the actual cutting of coal—most of the surface workers, pony minders, hauliers, and specialists such as repair workers, explosive experts etc.,—were paid on a time basis, at a set rate for each shift worked. The hewers themselves, in contrast, were paid in accordance with the actual amount of coal they produced.

1. Nütz Lange der Bergarbeiter p.60.
Whereas the shift rates paid to the former category tended to remain largely unchanged for relatively long periods, the piece rates - known as Gedinge - paid to the hewers were subject to monthly renegotiations between the manager or his representative and the hewers. "If there is any significant change in the rock, seam or other factor, either side can demand an immediate alteration or abolition of the rate", was how one set of mine rules put it; since the conditions of few seams remained constant for long, this system inevitably produced a state of almost constant negotiations.¹

The Gedinge system was a natural consequence of the geological and working conditions under which coal was cut. Payment on a time basis generally assumes a reasonably effective system of supervision, since otherwise there is little incentive to the worker to maintain what management consider a reasonable intensity of work. In the mines, however, supervision was extremely difficult, owing to the great number of scattered work places; the poor lighting made supervision even more difficult. Overmen generally visited each face only once or twice during a shift. This meant that if production was to be maintained at a high level payment had to be by results. One mines inspector described piece rates as "encouraging activity without supervision and therefore, with our mining conditions, indispensable."²

That the rates had to be subject to constant renegotiations was the result of the geological nature of the coal seams in the district;

2. Herbig "Schwierigkeiten des Lohnwesens".
unlike many seams in England, which were said to be relatively constant in their steepness and quality of coal and thus allowed fairly long-lasting price agreements, the coal seams in the Ruhr tended to be convoluted, and the coal could vary considerably in such crucial respects as its thickness and hardness. As a result the amount of effort and work required to produce a given quantity of coal varied enormously. The most straightforward solution was to assess the difficulty of the work afresh each month or whenever conditions showed a significant change, and to agree a rate in accordance with these new conditions, and this was the system adopted.¹

Such a wages system produced some adverse results. One problem was that the hewers were simply paid for the coal they produced, and although this was supposed to be sufficient to cover the time they also had to spend on preparatory and secondary work, particularly timbering, no special financial provision was made for such work. This meant that men were tempted to skimp on important work and cut corners with the aim of resuming coal cutting as soon as possible. This could increase the dangers from accidents.²

The system also meant that conflict between management and men was almost continuous. Every month negotiations took place to settle the rate. Usually the overman negotiated on behalf of the manager, although any agreement he reached might be only provisional until the

¹ Münz Lage der Bergarbeiter pp.68-69; Ketzner Soziale Fürsorge p.52. For a discussion of British price lists at this period, see Jevons British Coal Trade chapter XIV: the complexities do not appear to have revolved primarily around the actual rate for simple coal cutting; see also Douglass "Durham Pitmen" pp.239-240.

² Ketzner Soziale Fürsorge p.77.
manager had approved it himself. The team leader of the morning shift negotiated on behalf of the men, although in theory only on his own behalf, for the agreement which he reached was then applied to the other members of the team and to the afternoon shift. The interests of the management and the men were in clear conflict: management were concerned to keep down wages as far as possible, and would therefore stress the easy aspects of the work in prospect; the men, on the other hand, argued that the face was difficult, and that higher rates per truck were needed if they were to be able to earn a tolerable wage; to give their argument credibility they might deliberately reduce their output.

Many works' Rules stated that the rate had to be settled within ten days of the beginning of the month, and that if no agreement had been reached the "local normal daily wage" should be paid. But this too was often a matter for dispute. In fact the bargaining period might well be a period of a war of nerves, with the workers threatening to leave the mine and the management threatening to sack them if the other side did not accept their demands. At the inquiry at Bruchstrasse following the 1905 strike, the miners' delegates complained that the mine officials were very hostile to the workers in wage discussions: "If the rate on offer was not accepted they talked of notice or even immediate dismissal".

Two witnesses complained

1. StAB, Hh5, Denkschrift über die Untersuchung p.11; Netzner Soziale Fürsorge p.76.
2. Pieper Tage der Bergarbeiter p.58.
3. Herbig "Schwierigkeiten des Lohnwesens".
4. Hasslacher "Was ist unter 'ortsüblicher Tagelohn'...zu verstehen?" in Glückauf 19.9.1903.
5. STA1, Oberbergamt Dortmund 1735.
particularly about the behaviour of an overman named Gailenbrugge;
when the latter came to give evidence he commented:

"He had always had as his aim that the rate should be set so that
a hewer would earn at least 5M. He normally negotiated for a
lengthy time about the agreement, since the workers normally
demanded two or three times as much at first. He had not been
rude. He did remember an occasion in the autumn of the previous
year when he certainly had dealt sharply with them, and when they
had rejected an offer of 1.50 marks had shortly told them that
they could pack their things and leave. The reason was that he
had come across them having a long conversation and not working.
He had often noticed at Bruchstrasse that the men often stopped
work and chatted. This was particularly true at the start of
the morning shift. They were only allowed to stop for refresh­
ment once in the shift, and he had been enforcing this rule...." 1

There were similar complaints at other pits. At Shamrock an overman
named Schmidt explained that when he offered a wage rate:

"the men were at first normally not satisfied. After we had
discussed the work the team leader signed the agreement. There
were cases virtually every day in my section when some of the men
rejected the rate at first and would not sign. But it happened
just as often that the men earned quite satisfactorily at the rate
which they had at first rejected". 2

The overmen in fact had only limited freedom to negotiate with their
men, since they had to ensure that the total wage bill for their
section did not exceed the limits laid down by management. 3 Nevertheless, the wage system produced virtually a running conflict between
overmen and the miners for whom they were responsible. Bergassessor
Herbig commented:

"In daily inspections there is hardly ever not a small dispute in
which the worker emphasizes the bad aspects of the current
conditions of work, while the mine official has to be concerned,
in the interests of the employer, to check these problems for their
true significance and certainly not to overvalue them. This

1. ibid.
2. StAB, 456 Berwerksgesellschaft Hibernia to KUB 22.2.1905.
3. STA1J, Frankfurter Zeitung 11.2.1912.
concern with the fixing of piece-rates thus intrudes daily into relations between officials and workers; and thus one of the main advantages which the piece-rate system has in other industries - namely that with an agreement, this fundamental and therefore sharply disputed point is removed from debate, and that for as long as the agreement lasts there is a ceasefire - is lost. In mining the silent struggle over piece rates never lets up". 1

Since the main threat open to a miner who disliked the wage on offer was to resign and seek work elsewhere, the system gave great encouragement to the practice of job-changing, which, as we saw in the first chapter, was endemic in the district. The effectiveness of the threat to leave in search of better pay in practice depended on the state of the trade cycle. During booms a great many pits were keen to attract new labour so that finding a new job was not too difficult, but during recessions the problems were greater, and a miner who stuck out for a better deal was taking a significant risk. This mechanism helps to explain why both job-changing increased and wages rose during booms and fell in recessions. We find the process at work at Shamrock III/IV in December 1904: a hewer named Schulz was offered a reduced rate for the next month and rejected the offer; "After this the overman was so constantly on my back, that after I had tried to find work at other mines but failed, I eventually signed the agreement". 2 This willingness to look elsewhere for better pay naturally encouraged job-changing, and meant that the freedom to move from one pit to another - a freedom which the employers were keen to curtail - was of the utmost importance to miners

1. Herbig "Schwierigkeiten des Lohnwesens".

2. STAB, 158 Bergwerksgesellschaft Hibernia to KLB 22.2.1905; on the cyclical character of job-changing, see chapter 1.
as they sought to bid up their wages. Jakob Brodam, a miners' leader from Gelsenkirchen, denounced the lock-out by which the employers tried in 1889 to prevent job-changing: "The lock-out is preventing wages from rising, since it is no longer possible for the worker to leave one pit and seek work at another. Thus all competition is prevented." Luckily for the miners, their right to move in search of work was guaranteed in the liberal reform laws of the 1860's and as we have seen job-changing remained an important feature of life in the Ruhr up until the war. One mines inspector described this freedom to change jobs as "one of the workers' most important weapons in struggles with the mine owners, particularly in wage conflicts". It is not surprising that the employers resorted to company housing and other attempts to reduce job-changing.

One significant consequence of this system was that hewers' wages were extremely sensitive to cyclical fluctuations, since during economic upswings they could exploit the overall labour shortage and competition between pits to bid up wages, while in recessions they had to accept cuts. Since agreements only lasted a short time, wages responded quickly to changes in economic conditions. This contrasted with the other workers who were paid on a time basis, by the shift. Their rates were relatively inflexible, since there was no similar system of semi-automatic adjustment. During 1889, for instance, the wages of hewers in the Bochum area were reported to have increased by between

1. StAB, h61, Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung 29.10.1889; the theme was echoed by other miners' leaders such as Ludwig Schröder and Johannes Kohr; StAB, h62, Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung 14.12.1889, amt Herne to KLB 16.12.1889.

2. Oberschuir Heranziehung p.11.
thirty and forty per cent, while those of hauliers were estimated only to have risen by 18 per cent, and the wages of pony minders by 13 per cent. In the recession year of 1901, on the other hand, the average wages of hewers fell by 9 per cent, while those of other underground workers fell by 7 per cent, and those of surface workers by only 1 per cent. The relative stagnation of the wages of hauliers and other young shift-paid workers during upswings produced particular frustration among them and, as we shall see in the next chapter, played an important part in the precipitation of industrial unrest.

The wages of hewers were thus particularly susceptible to the operation of market forces of supply and demand. This forced the mines to follow each other fairly closely in their wage policies, to avoid the dangers of either losing their existing workers to rival pits or of precipitating a round of competitive wage bidding. In 1912, when several mines were considering raising wages, one newspaper observed: "If appreciable wage increases are introduced at some mines, others, particularly neighbouring mines, will have to follow to prevent people leaving their employment". The available statistics suggest that the wages paid by neighbouring pits did indeed bunch around the average level: in January 1890 the average of the average wages paid to hewers at 26 pits around Bochum was 4.53 marks per shift; ten of the pits were paying an average wage more than five per cent above or below that level.

1. StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1889; average hewers' wages in the Ruhr rose on average by 15.5 per cent between 1888 and 1889, while hauliers' etc. wages rose by 11.1 per cent and surface workers' by 8.9 per cent; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.17.

2. StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1901; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.1149.

more than \( U.0.76 \) or less than \( U.30 \) marks), but only two pits—Präsidet and Hannover—were paying their hewers an average wage more than ten per cent beyond the average.\(^1\) Such local variations were somewhat random, and liable to change from month to month. A more sustained differential persisted, however, between the general level of wages paid by the older mines in the southern part of the Ruhr district, and the newer ones to the north. The northern mines, being more recently established, had to attract and hold a virtually brand new labour force; and being deeper, with a greater fixed capital investment and richer coal seams, they could less well afford any loss of output through an inadequate work force. The result was that wages at the northern mines were generally higher—varying on average between \( 970 \) and \( 1,348 \) marks a year between 1890 and 1900, compared with a variation of between \( 923 \) and \( 1,296 \) marks a year at the more southerly mines in the same period.\(^2\)

More objectionable to many miners, however, than these variations in the level of wages between one mine and another, were variations within one mine itself. Hewers earned considerably more than surface and other workers: at Constantin II in January 1890 hewers earned on average \( U.66 \) marks per shift compared with only \( 2.32 \) marks for surface workers; at Bruchstrasse the hewers earned \( U.51 \) marks compared to \( 2.55 \) marks for surface workers, and the other mines showed similar differentials.\(^3\) But there were also considerable variations between

1. Figures from StAB, "61.
2. WJA, K2 213, Denkschrift betr. die Stilllegung verschiedener Steinkohlenzechen des Ruhr-Reviers p.9.
the earnings of hewers themselves, resulting partly from the differences in the physical conditions they faced, partly from the different terms they had been able to extract from the management, and partly from differing strength, skill, hours of work, and effort on the part of the men themselves. We get an idea of the spread of hewer's earnings from the figures for one large mine (unnamed) in June of each year between 1900 and 1907:

Table 16 Proportion of hewers with various earnings per shift, June, 1900-1907.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>-1.00</th>
<th>1.00-1.50</th>
<th>1.50-2.00</th>
<th>2.00-2.50</th>
<th>2.50-3.00</th>
<th>3.00-3.50</th>
<th>3.50-4.00</th>
<th>4.00-4.50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table demonstrates the wide range of hewers' earnings, despite the fact that in each year between 11 and 55 per cent of them were concentrated in one band of 50 Pfennigs. The precise degree of bunching of earnings varied from year to year. The table also illustrates the general fall in earnings in 1902 and the astonishing rise in 1907 (the average earnings of hewers in the Ruhr as a whole rose by 12 per cent, in 1907, from 1,661 marks in 1906 to 1,871 marks). A greater spread was found at

1. Hünz Lage der Bergarbeiter p.61.
2. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.119.
Bruchstrasse over the months of October to December 1904:

Table 17 Proportion of hewers with various earnings per shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnings (Marks)</th>
<th>Proportion of hewers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00 - 1.50</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.50 - 2.00</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 - 2.50</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50 - 3.00</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00 - 3.50</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.50 - 4.00</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar spreads of earnings were found elsewhere. Otto Hue commented:

"A small minority of the teams achieve very much higher wages than the average. This forces the 'average' up, but the wages of the great majority remain below it. The wages of one and the same category of worker fluctuate per shift, often by several marks."

The figures quoted suggest that the high earnings at the top were roughly balanced out by poor earnings at the bottom. Hue's comment does, however, point to the perceived reality behind the figures: that for any actual hewer the figures for "average" wages had only a limited relevance, since the pay which he might expect to receive could easily be quite different.

It is important to remember that these differentials relate to men doing the same job, so that while they may partially reflect differences in effort and physical strength, they do not reflect fundamentally different skill, as factory differentials may commonly do; and they certainly do not reflect differing social status, as

1. StAB, l55 Königlich Preussischer Staatsanzeiger 8.2.1905.
2. Cf. StAB, l62, Bergwerksgesellschaft Hibernia to KLB 15.2.1890; StAB, l45, Denkschrift über die Untersuchung; Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.298.
between the skilled and the unskilled. In 1905, indeed, it was claimed by one union leader (a member of the christliche Gewerkverein) that the skilled and experienced native Westphalians were penalized, as compared with recent immigrants from the east, since they were given the more difficult seams where the opportunities for high output were limited. Others, including Otto Hue, suggested that "miners' fate" and the personal whims of the overseers were the decisive factors in determining who earned badly or well. Whatever the reasons, the wide spread of earnings for one and the same job was commonly felt to be unjust. At the 1905 official commission of inquiry at Fruchstrasse the miners' delegates complained "that some teams who have worked hard and well earn poor wages, while in contrast other teams earn good wages. The difference is very marked and unjust, and there absolutely must be an equalization". The commission agreed: in their conclusions they reported, "the wage situation cannot be regarded as unfavourable, although it must be conceded that it appears desirable that the management introduce some degree of equalization of the teams' piece rates".

2. IZF, Westfälische Freie Presse 29.1.1891; Hue Bergarbeiter II p.679.
3. STAB, l55, Königlich Preussischer Staatsanzeiger 8.2.1905. Tenfelde is somewhat misleading with his claim: "The wage structure within the pit, the wage relationships of the various categories of worker above and below the surface, were apparently in general accepted by the miners". We shall see in the next chapter that the different treatment of workers on piece rates and on shift wages contributed substantially to the outbreak of strikes. Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.298.
Whatever the problems associated with the system of wage assessment for miners in the Ruhr, both contemporaries and historians have generally agreed that the miners at least did relatively well in the actual level of wages they received. Although challenged first by the Saar and later by the Aachen coal fields, miners in the Ruhr generally and on average earned more than their comrades in the other German coal fields.\footnote{Dr. Jüngst of the employers' federation, the Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen, claimed that the highest wages on the continent were paid in the Ruhr.} During disputes it was often claimed that the wages issue did not justify strike action, since the miners already earned well. Thus the Bochum Chamber of Commerce described the wage demands raised during the 1889 strike as "quite unjustified", on the ground that wages were already, even before the strike began, rising fast, and in 1890 the management of the Hannibal pit claimed that it had been proved "that in no other industrial district do the colliers earn so much with shorter hours as they do in the Westphalian district."\footnote{The view that the miners were particularly well paid has been reflected by more recent historians: discussing the causes of the 1905 strike, Koch comments that, "even less than in 1889 can one speak of an 'economic state of distress'", implying at least that the actual level of wages did not warrant serious discontent.} The view that the miners were particularly well paid has been reflected by more recent historians: discussing the causes of the 1905 strike, Koch comments that, "even less than in 1889 can one speak of an 'economic state of distress'", implying at least that the actual level of wages did not warrant serious discontent.\footnote{Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.106; cf. Crew Industry and Community pp.295-308.}

Nevertheless, we shall see when we come to look at the history of

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] Metzner Soziale Fürsorge p.56.
\item[2.] ibid. p.11.
\item[3.] MHA, HKE Jahresbericht 1888; StAB, h62, leaflet headed "Zeche Hannibal", 15.3.1890.
\item[4.] Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.106; cf. Crew Industry and Community pp.295-308.
\end{itemize}
mining strikes that the level of wages was a perennial ground for complaint and conflict and that very substantial increases in wages were frequently put forward as central strike demands. This suggests that there was a gap in the perception of the adequacy of miners' wages between employers and other commentators on the one hand and many miners on the other.

The level of miners' wages rose appreciably in cash terms after the dark days of the depression of the 1870's and 1880's. In 1879 the average level of hewer's earnings fell to 2.55 marks per shift; by 1882 it had reached three marks, by 1890 four marks, by 1900 five marks, and by 1907 six marks.\(^1\) It was this long-term rise in money wages which enabled the Bochum Amtsrichter, Neukamp, to comment in 1889, "that one could never speak here of starvation wages; that the miners have rather always earned wages which are not just adequate but rise proportionately with the improvement of the industrial situation."\(^2\)

The Amtsrichter was right to point to the close connection between wages and the state of the industry. Wages represented by far the largest single cost in the production of coal: between 1886 and 1913 wages represented between 46.7 per cent (in 1891) and 60.2 per cent (in 1908) of the value of total output for the Ruhr district as a whole.\(^3\)

1. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.17, 148-149. The final years before the war saw a slight fall and then a recovery to slightly over the 1907 position.
Clearly in these circumstances the employers were only likely to contemplate wage increases when the industry was prospering, and when recession struck it was the wage bill which offered the most promising area for substantial savings. The labour-intensive nature of the mining industry thus made miners' wages extremely vulnerable to the vagaries of the coal market. In the case of the Ruhr miners in our period this worked to their long-term advantage, in that the market for the coal they produced expanded extremely rapidly in this period; but the long-term rise in coal output and miners' wages was marked by cyclical recessions, during which - as we have already seen - output, hours of work and wages were all cut back. Thus the six-marks-per-shift average for hewers which had been reached during 1907 was not seen again until 1912.\(^1\) This cyclical vulnerability of their wages was one important source of the gap between the perception of miners themselves and others of the true state of their wages: while an outsider might point to the long-term improvement, the miner was more immediately interested in the specific recent fluctuations to which his wages had been subject. Closely related to this was the fact that - as we have seen - the figures for average wages conceal very considerable disparities, so that many individual miners did not feel that they were benefitting from the general prosperity as much as others. They too would not be overly impressed with average figures.

A further problem was that the figures which were generally used for

1. Koch *Bergarbeiterbewegung* p.149.
such calculations represented gross wages, and not the actual take home pay. The miner had to pay the mine for the tools, explosive and lamp oil that he used: in early 1898, when the average level of hewers' wages stood at 4.44 marks a shift, this was thought to average some 18 pfennigs a shift; the miner's contribution towards the Knappschaft averaged a further 16 pfennigs. In addition to these standard stoppages, the miner would find, if he lived in a company house, that his rent was taken from his wages; and if he had been granted credit at the company store, any debts would be deducted too. Finally, and perhaps most important, were the fines which could be imposed for late arrival, missing a shift without adequate reason, poor work, or other misbehaviour such as drunkenness at work. These fines could be fairly substantial: at Bruchstrasse in 1905 a man could be fined half an average day's earnings. Such deductions were, of course, to some extent subject to the decisions and actions of the miner concerned, and some, particularly cheap company housing, may actually have saved him otherwise necessary expenditure. Nevertheless, they did have the effect of substantially reducing his wage packet at the end of the month and emphasizing the gap in perception between the "average" wages about which he might read in the newspaper, and those which he actually received. There was a considerable distrust of the official statistics amongst miners - not least because they were based on the employers' returns. Ludwig Schröder, one of the miners' first leaders, declared in 1889: "For me, and for the miners generally,

1. StAB, L63, RFA to KLB 5.3.1898; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.90.
the only proof lies in the wage books". Unfortunately there appear to be no general statistics based on the actual wage books of individual miners.

One source of dispute over the correct interpretation of the rising level of money wages was the role of overtime and short-time working. We have already seen that during booms both the number of shifts worked and their length, tended to increase, while during recessions the reverse was true. One result was that annual earnings tended to fluctuate, both up and down, more sharply than average earnings per shift. Table 18 illustrates the process in the years between 1905 and 1912:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wages per shift</th>
<th>Increase/decrease</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Annual earnings</th>
<th>Increase/decrease</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>4.03 marks</td>
<td>+0.87 marks</td>
<td>+21 per cent</td>
<td>1,186 marks</td>
<td>+376 &quot;</td>
<td>+32 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>4.87 marks</td>
<td>-0.38 &quot;</td>
<td>-8 per cent</td>
<td>1,562 marks</td>
<td>-212 &quot;</td>
<td>-14 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>4.49 marks</td>
<td>+0.54 &quot;</td>
<td>+12 per cent</td>
<td>1,350 marks</td>
<td>+236 &quot;</td>
<td>+17 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>5.03 marks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,586 marks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These (official) figures demonstrate how a substantial proportion of increases and falls in annual earnings was caused not by changes in rates of pay, but rather in the hours of work. It was commonly asserted,

1. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.76.
2. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.119-150.
however, that the official figures underestimated the effect of lengthening hours of work, since many overtime shifts were not reported to the authorities. In 1899 the Volksblatt, the Bochum social democratic paper, complained that the bourgeois press was distorting the rising earnings of miners, by assuming that they were working around twenty-five shifts per month - and that rising overall earnings therefore reflected rising wage rates - when in fact between thirty and forty shifts were being worked each month: according to the paper, higher earnings resulted merely from these increased hours of work - from which the employers benefitted just as much as the men. In 1889 it was even claimed that the rising number of shifts being worked concealed an actual fall in the wages being paid for each shift. The miners' union commented in its report for 1899:

"It only needs ten overtime shifts, each at three marks, to be included with the normal shifts, and with 300 normal shifts in the year the wage rate will appear to have risen by ten pfennigs per shift - when in fact it has not risen by one pfennig! The more overtime shifts which are not separately calculated, the higher the 'normal wage' rises, but without the employer having to pay one jot more on his wages bill." It is impossible in the absence of systematic but non-official data to evaluate just how serious this problem was; nevertheless, it is clear that at least some of the increases in miners' earnings resulted - at least in the short term - from longer hours of work rather than from an actual improvement in the rate for the job.

1. Pieper Tage der Bergarbeiter p.76.
2. IZF, Volksblatt 5.1.1899.
4. IGBE, AI 12, Bergarbeiter-Verband Jahresbericht 1899.
The third major qualification to the rosy picture of miners' pay was presented by corresponding increases in prices, the effect of which might be to reduce if not eliminate improvements. The information on which we must base any assessment of the adequacy of miners' wages is, perhaps inevitably, rather patchy. Dr. Lorenz Pieper tried to persuade a number of families to record their expenditure in detail, for a year; he failed, however, because the people were mistrustful, and those who agreed to start did not keep them going.1 Louise Fischer-Eckert had greater success with her studies of families in Hamborn, and drew on the other available literature relating to Germany.2 Others made observations on the question from time to time. But there was no established index of the cost of living, particularly as it related to miners.3

Nevertheless, despite the problems there are some indications that by reference to the cost of living the wages of miners were not particularly generous: indeed, for many they appear to have been distinctly inadequate. In 1878, during the depths of the depression, Louis Taare (managing director of the Bochumer Verein) estimated that a workers' family needed some 800 marks in the year as an absolute minimum. The average wage for hewers that year was 2.66 marks per shift, so that 300 shifts would have been needed to earn 800 marks: it is probable that few hewers worked so many shifts at that time; and

1. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.228.
2. Fischer-Eckert Lage der Frauen chap,VI.
the wages for other categories of mine-worker were appreciably lower than those for hewers. In 1889 the Gelsenkirchen Bürgermeister estimated that a workers' family with three children needed at least 1,067 marks: the average miners' income that year was 941 marks, and even hewers averaged only 1,028 marks. It was variously calculated that a working class family of four needed to spend about half its income on food, and one estimate based on this assumption and the cost of food in Germany as a whole estimated that such a family needed to earn annually at least 1,200 marks in the years 1881-1889, 1,300 marks in 1890-1903, and 1,500 marks in 1904-1909. The average earnings of hewers in the Ruhr reached these levels in only ten of the 21 years between 1889 and 1909, while the earnings of other categories of mine worker never achieved these figures. Finally, in 1911 and 1912 the Arbeitsmarkt-Correspondenz published estimates of the cost of simply feeding a family of four in Germany, based on the rations of the marines and price data from 190 towns: between April 1911 and April 1912 it varied between 23.72 marks and 25.74 marks a week. The average miner's earnings in 1911 were 1,146 marks, and Fischer-Eckert estimated that rent for a four-room colony house (cheaper than a privately rented one) would take 192 marks, water rates a further 9.60 marks, rent for the oven 9.00 marks and tax 48.00 marks. This left a disposable income of only 22.88 marks a week - below the estimated level needed merely to feed four people, let alone clothe,


clean and generally supply them with all the necessities of life.¹

Such estimates are useful in giving a broad indication of the adequacy or otherwise of workers' earnings. They do not, however, do justice to the many and varied situations of the thousands of individual mine-workers and their families. As we have already seen, the average figures conceal wide variations between individuals and fluctuations between the earnings even of the same individual from one month to another. Just as important as these variations, however, in determining the miners' standard of living were the differences in their family situations. Fischer-Eckert, in her study of nearly five hundred workers' families in Hamborn, found that the more children a family had the more likely it was to be in serious poverty: not only were the actual financial costs of the family higher, but the mother found it increasingly difficult simply to cope with the housework, budgeting etc. Other factors seriously affecting families' standard of living included the health of both husband and wife, their savings (if any) and the wife's intelligence, experience and general ability to run a household.²

Some families were able to supplement the father's income from other sources. Here too family structure was important: while young children simply added to the family's costs, sons over school-leaving age could provide a second wage (provided, that is, they did not

2. ibid. pp.82-95; Lucas Arbeitradikalismus pp.57-70.
leave home: there were complaints that they frequently did so).¹

Many families, as we have seen, supplemented their income by having
one or more lodgers. Some kept a pig, a goat (known as "the miner's
cow") or some hens, and many grew their own vegetables.² In
addition the companies commonly supplied potatoes and sometimes other
food at low prices, sometimes from their own farms; and all miners
were by custom entitled to cheap coal.³ These practices helped to
supplement miners' wages. Nevertheless, as we saw in the first
chapter, the opportunities for women to find paid jobs - in other
situations one of the most important fall-backs for working class
families - were very limited in the Ruhr.

Despite all the caveats, there does appear to have been a real improve­
ment in the general level of miners' wages, even when price movements
have been taken into account. In part this was due to the low
starting point. In 1880 the Bochum town authorities described the
general level of workers' wages as, "being established at a level which
enabled the worker merely to meet his immediate expenses. Illness or
death in the family or temporary unemployment drove him - since there
were no savings - to poor relief..."¹ From about 1880, however, money
wages started to recover, and moved forward faster than food prices.
From a low of 2.79 marks in 1879, hewers' wages rose to over 4.00 marks
a shift in 1891 - an increase of well over a third. Over the same

1. StAB, lhl, Ant Bochum II to KLB 24.9.1889; Künz Lage der Bergarbeiter
p.136.

2. During a strike in spring 1891 one observer noted how the miners
relieved their wives of the tasks of planting the potatoes and beans:
StAB, lhl, Kölnerische Zeitung 23 (?).h.1891.


¹. StAB, Kanzlersbericht 1879/80 p.23.
period, despite the fact that 1891 was a year of particularly high food prices, only rye from amongst the basic food-stuffs rose by more: the price of rye at the Bochum market rose by over fifty per cent; bacon rose by 1% per cent, wheat by 8 per cent, and potatoes, beef, pork and butter all rose by five per cent or less.¹ Between 1891 and 1893 wages fell, while food prices varied, mostly falling to some extent but some - pork, bacon and butter - rising. After this set-back, the later 1890's saw a real improvement in average wages, relative to food prices. While the average wage rose by about a third from 3.11 marks to 4.18 marks per shift between 1893 and 1900, and average yearly earnings rose by over forty per cent from 946 marks to 1,332 marks, the prices of wheat, rye, pork and bacon actually fell in Bochum, beef remained stable, butter rose slightly and only potatoes showed a significant increase - although potatoes fluctuated rather violently from year to year.

The depression at the turn of the century brought a fall in the value of wages against food prices: between 1900 and 1903 annual earnings fell by almost ten per cent, while wheat, potatoes and beef rose in price, pork and butter remained steady, and rye fell slightly. Real wages rose again with the economic upswing, so that between 1903 and 1907 earnings rose by about a third while prices rose more moderately: grain (wheat and rye) by about 25 per cent, potatoes by nearly 20 per cent, meats by around 16 per cent, butter by nine per cent, and bacon

¹. Food prices are given in Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Die Entwicklung des ...Steinkohlenbergbaues XII pp.88-89; ZeitA, HKB Jahrestiche; Münz Lage der Pergarbeiter p.91; Silbergleit Preussens Städte pp.310-320; see also Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.307-321; Crew Industry and Community pp.305-306; Holcke Entwicklung pp.117-119.
by five per cent. This seems, however, to have been the end of the rise: average earnings declined by about seven per cent between 1907 and 1911, and such prices on which we have information in this period appear to have remained fairly stable.¹

High prices did nevertheless cause great concern in official circles in 1911. In their report for 1910 the Bochum Chamber of Commerce reported: "The higher earnings of workers have certainly been partially cancelled out by the price rises for some necessities, particularly meat, so that the consumption power of the industrial worker can scarcely have increased".² In the winter of 1911-1912 the town authorities established a special commission on prices, and consideration was given to the idea of taking over the distribution of vegetables. Eventually traders were persuaded to sell vegetables in bulk in a special cheap market, and by the autumn of 1912 the price of many vegetables had fallen dramatically.³ The town authorities organized the purchase of cheap beef from Holland, only ending the service when prices appeared more reasonable in 1913.⁴ The reasons for this panic in 1911 and 1912 are not entirely clear: the limited statistical information available does not suggest that prices were much higher in 1911 and 1912 than they had been in 1907, although wages had fallen in the meantime. It may be that prices had fallen in the meantime and then rose again sharply. What is clear, however,

¹. VWA, K2 816; StAB, Hörntischer Sprecher 8.1.1912.
². StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1910.
³. StAB, HKB Jahresbericht 1911/12 p.96; VWA, K2 816; StAB, Hörntischer Sprecher 8.1.1912.
⁴. StAB, Magistrats-Bericht 1912 p.117; Drinkmann Bochum p.223.
is that despite the considerable improvement in real wages over the years, the advance was not massive or irreversible.¹ A considerable degree of uncertainty continued to surround the improvements which miners - and other workers in the district - had seen in their standard of living, and there was little room for complacency.

Nor should we make the error of assuming that even when the general level of wages was relatively good, this necessarily meant a high "standard of living". In part this was because of the considerable uncertainties which, as we have seen, surrounded the earnings of any particular miner, whatever the average level of wages. In part, however, it was due to the ignorance and lack of numerical and household skills of many miners and their wives. Some miners found it difficult to calculate what they were owed from one pay-day to the next: some relied on chalking up on a door at home the number of hours and shifts they had worked and how many trucks of coal had been produced in order to keep some check on the eventual wage slip.²

The problem was made more difficult by the custom of calculating wages on a monthly basis, with an advance paid in the middle of the month. This system meant that, compared with weekly pay-days, the family received a relatively large sum of money twice a month, which was then expected to last for two weeks. Some families appear to have succumbed

¹ Writing shortly before the outbreak of war, Fischer-Eckert concluded that in over half of the Hamborn workers' families which she investigated, "the total family income did not cover the necessary expenditure". Fischer-Eckert Lage der Frauen p.127.

² Hoffeld Bilder aus dem Bergmannsleben p.11.
to the temptation to blow too much of it when they had the chance, either on drink or on "luxuries", and then suffered serious shortages or got themselves into increasing debt with shop-keepers until the next pay-day came round. Dr. Pieper commented:

"It is a notorious fact that the Ruhr miner's household shows a striking lack of economy, practical supervision and a thrifty division of tasks. One who has not seen it for himself would not believe the uneconomic, ill-considered and often virtually absurd manner in which goods and food for half or an entire month are purchased or borrowed, and that some - for instance meat, margarine, butter etc., - are allowed to spoil or are wasted too quickly. Omitting to consider the time till the next pay-day, they simply go ahead and buy freely. With weekly pay-days the miner and his wife would become accustomed to better supervision of the household necessities, and manage the smaller sums more rationally. Similarly they would not borrow so readily and thus avoid dependence on traders and shop-keepers. Weekly payments thus have educational and economic advantages". ¹

Of course the ability or lack of it to manage a household satisfactorily varied very markedly from family to family. Some miners were thrifty and managed to save considerable sums.² Nevertheless, the task facing the miner's wife was difficult, particularly if she had many children to care for, and good management demanded skills and a self-discipline which many lacked. The more children, and the lower or more unpredictable the money handed over by her husband, the more impossible was the task of the housewife to supply the needs of her family without resorting to credit and running up debts.³ Thus even high wages, particularly when they only lasted for a while, by no means translated automatically into real prosperity for the miner's

¹. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.70.
². The average size of miners' accounts in the Bochum Stadtische Sparkasse in 1895 was 1,190 marks - more than a year's average earnings. But only a small minority of miners appear to have had an account at all, and the number "decreased rapidly between 1867 and 1895". Crew Industry and Community pp.252-253.
³. Fischer-Eckert Lage der Frauen chapter V.
That was only to be achieved by such a favourable conjunction of circumstances, and its continuation was subject to so many uncertainties, that to at least some families there must have seemed little point in looking much beyond immediate needs and immediate pleasures.

**Conclusions**

In the first chapter we noted that for many Germans in the early and mid-nineteenth century the chief problem was the absence of work, whether on the land or in the towns, and that it was the expansion of industry which transformed their prospects in the second half of the century. The coal industry of the Ruhr played a central part in this industrial expansion, providing an almost insatiable demand for labour which drew in men from all over Germany and beyond.

The work that miners do has never been other than hard, dangerous and unpleasant. As an official enquiry noted in Britain in 1972:

> "Other occupations have their dangers and inconveniences, but we know of none in which there is such a combination of danger, health hazard, discomfort in working conditions, social inconvenience and community isolation". ¹

With the qualification that "community isolation" was much less marked in the Ruhr than in, say, the Welsh valleys or Durham pit villages, these words broadly applied to mine-work in the Ruhr seventy and more years previously. Although men were attracted to the industry by the promise of high wages, they discovered that it needed long hours of back-breaking toil in the dark, dirty and perhaps damp pit. A man

---

could not sustain it for long: if his career, or even his life, was not abruptly cut short by an accident, his strength was gradually sapped by toil, dust, disease and the small injuries which no-one could entirely avoid, so that in early middle age he was forced to take lighter and less well paid jobs. In addition his pay might be uncertain and low, his hours long, and he was subjected to hard and sometimes bullying overmen.

These aspects of work in the pits were experienced to a greater or lesser extent by all mine-workers, although the precise experience naturally varied between individuals, places and times.¹ They provided a solid basis for discontent and expressions of protest. But there was additionally a psychological - even a moral - element to dissatisfaction over pit work at this time, caused by the decline in status which such work underwent in the second half of the nineteenth century. Until the liberalization of the 1850's and 1860's mine work had been a privileged and honoured calling, set apart from other forms of manual work by such signs as membership of the Knaopschaft (which until the 1850's fulfilled an important social as well as insurance function), exemption from military service, job security, direct management by royal officials, special uniforms, celebrations etc. As Crew has observed: "To be a miner was not simply to earn a living digging coal, but to exercise a calling with

¹. Tenfelde stresses, for instance, the particularly bad conditions during the depression years of the 1870's and 1880's; his detailed analysis does not, however, extend beyond 1889: Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.273-282.
special privileges and distinctive moral qualities and responsibilities".¹

This position changed drastically as legal privileges were abolished and the direct patronage of the state was in large measure withdrawn. Associated with these changes was the simultaneous transformation of the economic nature of the industry and position within it of the mine-workers: from a small select group, they became a large labour force, commonly with no background in the industry; in place of a protected, secure place of work the miner was compelled to compete in an economic environment characterized by uncertainty, fluctuation and change; and from being the elite workers of the district (in standing but not always in earnings), miners found this position going increasingly to skilled and highly prized workers in the metal industries. The mass influx of newcomers to the mines, often despised by longer-established workers for their uncouthness and poverty, demonstrated to all that mine-work was no longer in any sense an exclusive or even socially respected profession.

The result was a loss of prestige and status, much commented on by both contemporaries and historians.² Otto Hue, writing shortly before the First World War, argued that "the German mine-workers have fallen materially and morally behind, even in relation to those groups of

---

¹ Crew Industry and Community p.312; for a full discussion both of the position of the miners in the Vorräte and the impact of the loss of their privileges, see Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte; W. Fischer Bedeutung der preussischen Bergrechtsreform.

² Amongst the latter, see Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.311-312; Gladen "Streiks der Bergarbeiter" p.112; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.15, 135; Crew Industry and Community pp.311-315; Lucas suggests that miners in new districts such as Hamborn found it more difficult to acquire the traditional pride in their work than in longer-established mining districts such as Bochum, but perhaps underestimates the extent of change even in Bochum: Lucas Arbeitseradikalismus p.15.
workers compared to whom the colliers (Knappen) held a kind of socially aristocratic position at the time of the old mining regime.¹ Heinrich Imbusch, a leading Catholic union leader, observed: "If the miners were formerly particularly highly regarded, with the passage of time they became the least respected. Yes, even workers in other trades frequently thought they could look down upon them."² Louise Fischer-Eckert wrote in her study of Hamborn:

"In general the miners are less highly regarded socially than the factory workers, because the mining profession attracts very many who only want temporary work, or who would otherwise face disaster. The factory worker, on the other hand, must - particularly if he works at the smelter, the blast furnace or in the rolling mill - deliver quality work, for which his years of training and apprenticeship have qualified him."³

The process of social decline - described by some as "proletarianization" - was reflected in the gradual replacement of the prestigious term "Bergmann" with the common "Bergarbeiter".¹¹ Miners who had the necessary connections frequently tried to ensure that their sons found factory work - even unskilled work - rather than follow them into the pit.⁵

The relative decline in the status of mine work was thus marked and

1. Hue Bergarbeiter II p.113.
2. Imbusch Arbeitsverhältnis p.126.
4. Proletarianization was the main theme of Hue's Bergarbeiterbewegung II; see also Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.14; Fischer Bedeutung der preussischen Bergrechtsreform p.23; Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.339; Conze "Vom 'Pöbel' zum 'Proletariat'".
5. Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.14; Crew Industry and Community pp.95, 218.
provided a further dimension to the emergence of discontent in the mines. Nevertheless, its impact should not be overstated.  

Pride in the skills and courage of mine work were far from dead in the later nineteenth century: some (presumably unskilled) metal workers were referred to contemptuously as "coolies".  

Even before the economic liberalization miners' earnings had been lower than those of some skilled metal workers, and although miners' pay may have fallen further behind during the depression years of the 1870's and 1880's, they appear to have increased somewhat faster thereafter. Despite complaints from the mining industry that young workers who had once tasted factory work could not be induced to return to the pits or to stay there, other industrialists complained that the high wages which even young men received in the mines discouraged them from undergoing the long and relatively poorly paid apprenticeship which was necessary to acquire skilled status. The picture was therefore not one-sided.

1. Historians who have perhaps tended to do so include Koch ("The social decline of the miners' estate in the second half of the 19th century was the most important pre-condition for a trade union organisation of mine-workers."), and Tenfelde who sees the decline in status, combined with continued elements from the past, as central to the emergence of later forms of miners' protest: Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.135; Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.331-342. See also the discussion in Crew Industry and Community pp.308-321.


3. Tenfelde points out that other groups had always earned more than the miners, but suggests confusingly that in the 1880's the miners lost their place "at the top of the wage scale". The higher proportion of wages in mining costs probably did lead to a greater wage squeeze during the depression than in more capital-intensive industries. However, at the Bochumer Verein average miners' earnings, having lagged behind average metal workers' earnings for most of the 1880's and 1890's moved ahead for all but four of the years between 1900 and 1911. Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.114-115, 310; Döbritz Bochumer Verein Table 1; Crew Industry and Community pp.295-301.

Finally, the major changes in the legal and social position of the miners occurred during the 1850's and 1860's - well outside the personal experience of the miners of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, relatively few of whom even came from families with a background in the area or in the industry. It was primarily more immediate and more concrete features of mine work which, as we shall see in the next chapter, provided the basis for miners' protest.
It is not surprising, in view of the harsh working conditions to which they were subjected, that the miners should protest and seek to secure improvement and change. We have already alluded to two common forms which such efforts took. One was simply to stay away from work, a practice particularly common after pay-days and week-ends; although not providing for any lasting change to the conditions of work, it did offer some relief from them. Another was the practice of job-changing - a practice fostered by the unsettled nature of much of the mining work force, the close geographical proximity of many pits, and the constant bargaining which was a central feature of the wages system. Both job-changing and absenteeism were more pronounced during economic upswings than during recessions, since miners realised that they were in a strong bargaining position and ran little risk of becoming unemployed.

Absenteeism and job-changing were endemic expressions of discontent with the nature and conditions of work in the pits and of a widespread desire for relief and for something better. In most cases, however, they were simply the actions of particular individuals, seeking relief or improvements for themselves alone. They did not generally imply any significant solidarity with other workers, and were quite compatible with a deeply divided working class. In this chapter and the next we will turn to forms of protest and action which depended for success on a considerable degree of collective solidarity: in this chapter the
strike and in the next the formal organisation. Neither could succeed unless large numbers of miners were willing to act together in their common interest and therefore implied a collective approach and a collective loyalty. Their history offers an important indication of the degree to which the common experience of work in the pits was able to transcend the social divisions within the working class and produce a sense of collective solidarity and class consciousness.

In the days before the liberalization of the mining industry, neither strikes nor trade union organisation were known in the industry. Nevertheless, miners could and did express their wishes in a collective manner, through petitions and pleas to the royal mining authorities and ultimately to the king himself. Although this form of collective expression declined in importance following the reforms of the 1850's and 1860's, when power over the mines was shifted from the Government to the owners, and labour was subjected to the workings of the free market, echoes of it did persist. Strikes and trade union organisation were, however, qualitatively different in that they implied an acceptance of and commitment to conflict between workers and employers, whereas the petitions were based on the assumption of paternalist fairness and harmony. Since petitions and pleas had ceased to occupy a central

1. It will be necessary in this chapter to refer from time to time to the trade unions: their history will be treated more systematically in the next chapter.

2. The history of the system of pleas and petitions before and after the liberalization of the industry has recently been traced in considerable detail by Tenfelde in Sozialgeschichte. The last major attempt to secure reforms in this manner was the delegation to the Kaiser in 1889, although significantly this took place during the great strike of that year. In 1890 miners' leaders explicitly rejected the notion of mass petitions to secure reforms. G.A. Ritter and K. Tenfelde "Der Durchbruch der Freien Gewerkschaften Deutschlands zur Lassenbewegung im letzten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts" in H.O. Vetter (ed) Vom Sozialisten-gesetz zur Mitbestimmung (Köln, 1975) pp.63, 87.
place within the forms of collective expression used by miners in our period, although they did still occur from time to time, we will note them only in passing; nevertheless, the broader issue of attempts to secure from the state concessions which the employers refused to grant will recur.

Mine-workers have commonly been noted for their willingness to strike.\(^1\) Strikes were fairly common at Ruhr pits. In the years between 1889 and 1914, we have records of at least 17 strikes at the mines around Bochum. Most were localized and small scale stoppages, affecting anything from one to half a dozen mines, and usually blowing over in a few days. Others, such as those of 1899 and 1907, could affect a number of mines in one district. And there were three "general" strikes, in 1889, 1905 and 1912, when virtually every mine in the Ruhr was affected.

Historians have generally tended to treat the three large strikes in isolation and to play down or ignore the smaller ones.\(^2\) If, however, we are to understand the characteristics - including the strengths and weaknesses - of miners' strikes as such, it is clearly necessary to consider the minor as well as the major ones.

**Spontaneous outbreaks**

An important aspect of the great majority of mining strikes was their spontaneous and unplanned nature. They grew out of the frustrations of ordinary mine workers, and not from the plans of political or union

1. For the classic international comparison with other occupational groups, see Kerr and Siegel "Interindustry Propensity to Strike". For a critique of their theory in the case of France, see E. Shorter and C. Tilly *Strikes in France, 1830-1968* (Cambridge 1974) pp.287-295

2. For two recent examples, see Gladen "Streiks" and Crew *Industry and Community* chapter VI. An important recent exception is Tenfelde *Sozialgeschichte*, which does not, however, extend beyond 1889.
leaders. This was not always recognized by the authorities: according to the Arnsberg Regierungs-Präsident the 1889 strike, "was whipped up by socialist efforts aiming at the subversion of the existing order in a manner calculated to endanger public peace and particularly the harmony between classes". ¹ Others saw the hand of the Catholic Ultramontanes behind the stoppage, and in other strikes too "agitators" were to be held responsible. ² Nevertheless, the 1889 strike was in practice entirely spontaneous and unplanned. Prior to the strike there were no mass miners' organisations in existence, and the organisations which did exist did not wish to provoke confrontations. The Catholic Johannes Fussangels Rechtsschutzverein and the more socialist orientated Glückauf societies (led by Ludwig Schröder) were small and concentrated on semi-legal issues such as insurance provisions, avoiding emotive issues such as wages, hours and conditions of work. In late 1888 and early 1889 industrial unrest affected a number of industries and places in Germany. ³ Nevertheless, the first public discussion of miners' wages was at a meeting of miners' delegates in January 1889, and even then the issue was subordinated to others such as improved medical facilities for miners and their families and the establishment of a miners' newspaper for the whole of Germany. ⁴ The leaders seem to have deliberately avoided the subject of wages, and although at further delegate meetings in March and April wages, hours and other immediate issues came to the fore, the

1. StAB, h36, RPA to KLB 29.5.1889.
2. StAB, hh0, KLB to Amt 28.5.1889; StAB, hh1, Die Post 1.9.1889; StAB, HICB Jahresbericht 1891/92; StAB, h51, Kölnische Zeitung 1.7.1899; MWA, KZ 199, HICB to Minister für Handel und Gewerbe 19.3.1912.
initiative appears to have come from below rather than from leaders. Talk of the possibility of strike action in pursuance of wage demands was met by Schröder with the argument that the building of a strong organisation was more important: with that demands could be won without the need to actually strike.¹

When nonetheless stoppages in the Ruhr pits did start to take place in April and May 1889, they did so in a random and unco-ordinated manner. The last days of April saw isolated and short strikes for higher wages at Präsident in Bochum and Wilhelmine Victoria near Gelsenkirchen.²

On 2 May there were short stoppages at Friedrich Ernestine and Dahlbusch; at Consolidation a red flag was raised - and rapidly removed by the police. On Friday 3 May the hauliers at Hibernia (near Gelsenkirchen) demanded a wage increase of 20 pfennigs a shift, and hauliers and other young miners at Rheinelbe und Alma and other pits around the town joined in with similar demands. The Hibernia hauliers received no reply to their demand and decided not to work the next day, and ½ of their colleagues at Rheinelbe und Alma were sacked for their impertinence in raising the demand at all. This meant that in the evening there were large numbers of angry young workers in Gelsenkirchen, and when the police tried to clear a tavern it provoked an angry reaction: a street battle developed, with the police having to seek shelter from stones. Someone fired two shots from an upstairs window, hitting no-one, but making the house the focus of the crowd's rage. The police had to rescue two young men from it under a hail of stones from the crowd. There were then attacks on

1. IGBE, A. Siegel Kein Lebenskampf (unpublished typescript) p.64.
shops, window breaking, and some shooting. Only at about 11 o'clock did the police manage to restore order. ¹

So far the strike had consisted of isolated stoppages at first one mine and then another, and had not spread beyond the hauliers and other young workers. The riot in Gelsenkirchen effectively marked the start of the general strike. The military were called in to restore order, and this seems to have acted as a spur to the men - hewers as well as hauliers - to stop work at pit after pit. August Siegel, one of the miners' leaders in the Dortmund area, in later years recalled: "Early on Monday morning some of the pits in the Dortmund district were already occupied by the military. At the sight of the soldiers the lads turned back; thus one mine after another came to a standstill."²

As the strike spread there were fears amongst some officials and observers of intimidation and violence. Some incidents were reported: at Julius Philipp it was said that miners were being threatened by outside strikers.³ The worst violence, however, came from the soldiers: at Graf Molkte near Essen three men were shot dead and seven were seriously wounded, one of them dying later, after an attack on the pit and attempts at sabotage. In Herne a man was shot dead by the police after allegedly opening fire at them himself. Outside Bochum a man was bayonetted to death after trying to bring in his (miner) son who had

3. StAB, h36, Julius Philipp to KLB 9.5.1889.
apparently been involved in an attempted attack on the Herminenglück Liborius pit. In the centre of Bochum itself troops opened fire to disperse a crowd and killed two innocent bystanders, who were emerging from the main station, and wounded four more. Other incidents were reported from other areas.¹

Despite these violent incidents there appears to have been very little intimidation. Strikers toured from pit to pit, but their appeals to those still working to join them were generally accepted without any need for threats. The great bulk of the reports to the Bochum Landrat emphasised the peaceful nature of the strike. From Stockum on 9 May came the telegram: "This morning work stopped at both shafts of Neu Iserlohn, Siebenplaneten, Borussia and Germania. So far peaceful but gendarmes wanted".² The semi-official Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung conceded that, with individual exceptions, the strikers "had not left the ways of legality".³ Nor was there any sign that specifically socialist agitation played any significant part in spreading the strike.⁴ Nevertheless, despite the lack of organisation and leadership, within a few days the stoppage affected virtually every mine and involved an overwhelming majority of the mineworkers. By 10 May around 81,000 of the 115,000 mineworkers in the Ruhr were on strike, and at twelve pits around Bochum it was estimated that only 200 of the 9,700 miners had not

¹ Der Ausstand pp.13-1h; StAII, Oberpräsidium 2828 Bd.2, Oberbürgermeister Bochum to Oberpräsident Münster 10,11.5.1889.
² StAB, h36, Amt Stockum to KLB 9.5.1889.
³ StAII, Oberpräsidium 2828 Bd.3, Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung 11.5.1889.
⁴ StAB, h36, Amt Bochum I to KLB 7.5.1889.
joined the stoppage. By 13 May over 90,000 miners were out.¹

It was only when the strike was in full swing that any evident leadership emerged. At each pit the strikers met and elected delegates to speak for them. The extent of the solidarity behind the strike was illustrated by the broad range of political and religious backgrounds which the delegates possessed: of 105 delegates from around Bochum 49 were Protestant, 46 were Catholic, and the religion of ten was unknown; 24 of them were National Liberals, 32 were Centre Party supporters, 14 were social democrats, one was a "Christian socialist" and the politics of the remaining 34 was unknown.² They thus represented a broad cross-section of opinion, and even the National Liberals - the party of most of the employers in the Ruhr - were well represented amongst them.

Central leadership was only established at a conference of strike delegates on 10 May when a central strike committee was elected. Nevertheless, even then the power of the elected leaders remained extremely limited. Johannes Fussangel and Lambert Lensing, two radical Catholic newspaper editors, exercised considerable influence on events. Of the three delegates who went on 14 May to Berlin to intercede for the strikers with the Kaiser himself, only one, Fritz Bunte, was a member of the strike committee and he was overshadowed by Ludwig Schröder who had been active for many years in the Glückauf miners¹

¹ Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.139; Köllmann and Gladen Bergarbeiterstreik pp.70-71.
² StAB, kliO. The delegates are those from Bochum North and South, Herne, Langendreer and Werne.
association. The three delegates had no formal mandate from the strikers, and consulted the old socialist Wilhelm Tölcke before agreeing to go at all. The general lack of organisation thus put considerable influence in the hands not of formally elected leaders, but of generally respected individuals.

Nevertheless, real power lay not with any "leaders" - not even with the delegates - but below, with the strikers themselves. This became painfully apparent in the later stages of the strike. On May 19 a delegate conference held in Bochum decided, against the advice of the central strike committee, that the strike should be ended on the basis of the employers' "Essen Protocol", but many miners felt cheated and refused to return to work. The central strike committee then called for the strike to continue, and at a further delegate conference on May 21, apparently in spite of their own reservations, they supported the calls for further strike action. But by now many pits were already back at work and others continued to return. On May 25 the delegates from Holland, Fröhliche Morgen sonne, Hannover and Marianne issued a proclamation calling on the men to return to work since the employers were fulfilling their promises in the Essen Protocol "in all significant points". And the strike, partly for these reasons and partly because of increased repression from the authorities, did indeed collapse in the next few days. The hesitancy and indecision of the leadership had merely reflected their lack of real authority over the miners.

1. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.36-37; Siegel Mein Lebenskampf p.70.
2. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.39-40;
3. STAI., Oberpräsidium 2828 Bd.6.
The 1889 strike was thus an overwhelmingly spontaneous affair, in which leaders could play only a severely circumscribed role. Later in the year a miners' union was formed, providing in permanent form an organisational and leadership structure. Nevertheless, mining strikes in subsequent years continued to show the same largely spontaneous characteristics, and the initiative continued to lie in nearly every case not with "leaders" but with the miners themselves. In January 1890 a list of demands was made to the employers by the union, but in the agitation which took place in the following weeks the men at individual pits felt free to put their own, often differing, demands. When a strike eventually broke out at the end of March it did so in a completely unco-ordinated manner, affecting only a handful of pits. After spreading to some neighbouring mines around Gelsenkirchen and Bochum the strike collapsed.

In 1891 the third important strike attempt in as many years took a similar course. In February a list of demands was formulated by a central meeting of miners' delegates, and was then circulated for discussion at local meetings. But when in April a strike broke out, it did so without any co-ordination or central direction, and seriously embarrassed the miners' leaders. The management at Eintracht Tiefbau, situated between Essen and Bochum, closed off one of the shafts to prevent the men from leaving work early. On 16 April sixty men stopped work in protest, and the next day saw a complete cessation of work.

1. The history of the unions will be considered in the next chapter.

2. StAB, h62; Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Die Entwicklung des... Steinkohlenbergbaues XII pp.237-238.
Three strike delegates were elected, and although the local Government official agreed to talk with them, the mine management refused to recognise them or make any concessions. The strikers called on men at neighbouring pits to support them, and on 21 April men from Fröhliche Vorgensonne, Centrum, Hasenwinkel and Friedlicher Nachbar came out. 1

The miners' political and union leaders were unhappy with the spontaneous stoppage. 2 The social democratic newspaper commented on 2 April, as the strike spread from pit to pit:

"Coal barons and ultramontanes clearly have an interest in the outbreak of a strike: the former to prevent coal prices from falling, and the latter to destroy the miners' organisation. We repeat our warning to the miners not to follow the siren voices of the ultramontanes and the provocation of the coal barons, because in present conditions any strike must be regarded as lost from the outset". 3

But the next day they had to recognize their powerlessness: "If the miners do not listen to well intentioned advice or if they are unable to control their bitterness any longer, then all right; let it run its course; we cannot prevent it". 4 It was only the next day, 26 April, that a union delegate meeting gave official support to the strike. 5

By 1891 the leading Catholic miners had left the original union - henceforward known as the Alter Verband - and had formed their own rival

1. StAB, h63, Kohle und Eisen 18.2.1891; StAB, hh7, Kölnische Zeitung 23.4.1891.
2. IZF, Westfälische Freie Presse 9.5.1891.
3. ibid. 2h.4.1891.
4. ibid. 25.h.1891.
organisation (named Glückauf). The district between Bochum and Essen where the strike started was predominantly Catholic, and the Catholic union leaders had participated in the original February meeting. Nevertheless, despite the allegations from the social democrats that they were fomenting the stoppage, the Catholic leaders showed themselves equally unable to control the situation. Anton Fischer, the chairman of Glückauf, at first showed some sympathy for the stoppage, but on 26 April issued a statement in the name of the union's executive urging the miners to stay at work:

"We are against a strike, and therefore call on the Christian miners of the Rhineland-Westphalian coalfield not to stop work.... We believe that our demands are justified and can and must be implemented. We also know that the present unrest has been provoked by the indefensible behaviour of the Eintracht Tiefbau management and that it has been exacerbated by social democratic agitators - even though the Alter Verband's paper is now speaking against a strike to let others get hurt. We urgently call on the Government to implement the reasonable wishes of the miners in the forthcoming reform of the mining law".  

Nevertheless, the Eintracht Tiefbau strikers rejected this appeal and on 27 April Anton Fischer himself stopped work at Herkules.  

The gloomy prognostications of the various miners' "leaders" were in the event fulfilled: the strike reached its peak on 28 April when 18,000 men (or thirteen per cent of the miners in the Ruhr at the time) from 15 pits were out, but this was rapidly followed by a large scale return to work under threats of dismissal from the employers. The ending of the strike was followed by the sacking of strikers and

delegates at many pits. The events of late April 1891 had demonstrated again the spontaneous and undisciplined character of mining strikes and the difficulties which leaders of all political persuasions had in exercising real authority over them.

The next major strike attempt, that of January 1893, was unusual in that it was one of the few miners' strikes specifically called for by the miners' union leaders. There had been some agitation in the preceding months on the issue of reform of the Knappschaft and the introduction - following a Government reform of the mining law - of revised and codified Work Rules for each mine. But the agitation had not looked likely to lead to a strike, and there seems no doubt that it was only the outbreak of a strike in the Saar mines late in 1892 which made a Ruhr strike a serious possibility. Miners' meetings were held in Essen, Gelsenkirchen and Dortmund on 6 January and there were calls for strike action to express solidarity. On Sunday 8 January a delegates' meeting in Bochum decided to strike immediately.

This strike too, despite its "official" character, failed to win adequate support and ended in complete defeat. On 13 January over 21,000 miners - about 1½ per cent of the total number in the Ruhr - were on strike, but the following day the number had fallen to only 15,600 and by the end of

1. Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen Entwicklung des...Steinkohlenbergbaues XII p.239; BA 20/A h5, "Geschichte der Zeche Hannover"; IZF, Westfälische Freie Presse 30.1.1891; StAB, lh7.

2. StAB, lh8, RPA to KLB 31.12.1892; STAL, Oberpräsidium 269h Bd.I, RPA to Minister des Innern 8.5.1893.

the second week the strike was virtually over. The stoppage might indeed have ended even more speedily but for the very tough attitude shown both by the employers and the Government: the former threatened that all workers who broke their contracts by staying away from work without due notice would be sacked or fined, while the Government authorities imposed blanket bans on meetings (an act of doubtful legality) and arrested both central and local union leaders. Whilst this intimidated some - the notice given to 200 men at Hibernia led to a large return to work there - it hardened the resistance of others.

The 1893 strike marked the end of the wave of unrest which affected the Ruhr mines in the years after the 1889 strike. The next few years saw only isolated stoppages at individual mines. The strikes at Constantin in 1896 and at Holland and Osterfeld in 1897 were very much local and unplanned affairs, soon over. The next substantial strike occurred at the pits around Herne in 1899, and once again the pattern of spontaneous and unplanned militancy was shown.

The 1899 strike was preceded by very little agitation. The social democrats had been campaigning against the Government's Zuchthausvorlage, an issue which played absolutely no part in the strike. There had been rumours that during a recent Belgian miners' strike coal from Herne had been sent to help out the affected pits, but this was probably untrue. Only a week before the strike broke out the Herne branch of the Alter

1. StAB, Mh8, Ausstands-Journal.
2. WKA, HKB Jahresbericht 1892 p.12; StAB, Mh8.
3. STAM, RA I 74, KLB to RPA 2h.h.1896; StAB, M79, RPA to Minister des Innern 9.11.1897.
Verband had made an excursion to the Ruhr valley to enjoy the scenery amid "singing and beer". On the other hand a number of mines in the area were in the process of raising or considering raising the wages of the hauliers and other young workers, and this seems to have raised sensitivity to questions of the pay packet.

The strike was sparked off by an increase in the Knappschaft contributions of young workers. On June 22, the pay day for the month of May, many workers found that their wage increases were eliminated or that their wages actually fell as a result: the position was particularly bad since May 1899 contained five Mondays and therefore unusually high deductions. There was much grumbling, and the next day many workers stayed away from work. This in itself was not an unusual occurrence after a pay day, but in the following days the number not working increased. Most of those staying away from work were Poles, and the reason seems to have been that they saw particularly little merit in higher Knappschaft contributions: many Poles saw themselves as only temporary visitors to the west and were more interested in immediate cash than in longer term insurance entitlement.

The strike lasted for a week and affected about ten mines. Even at the

1. IZF, Volksblatt 6.6.1899, 17.6.1899; StAB, h51, General Anzeiger, Dortmund 5.7.1899.
2. StAB, h51, Rhein.-Westfälische Zeitung n.d.
pits affected the stoppage was far from complete, and there were some violent incidents as police tried to protect would-be workers from the fury of the strikers. In the worst clash - in the centre of Herne - three people were shot dead by the police.\(^1\) Only on June 29, a Catholic holiday, was the stoppage complete, and after a week the strikers returned to work.

The strike was opposed by all shades of political opinion. The leaders of the Alter Verband, the main miners' union, heard nothing of it until June 21, two days after the dispute started:

"This proves that our union had nothing to do with the origin of the stoppage. Organised workers did not originate the strike, since our members would immediately have got into contact with the union HQ / in Bochum /, which they could have done quickly on the tram. Whenever there is a conflict in some mine or other in Lower Saxony, Saxony, mid-Germany or the Ruhr we learn of it very quickly, even when only a small part of the work force is organised".\(^2\)

Ludwig Schröder attempted on 25 June at a public meeting in Herne to appeal for a return to work; following the closure of the meeting by the police he issued his appeal through the union's paper. The social democrats also called for an end to the strike: their Dortmund paper commented:

"Organised workers would have recognised immediately that a rise in Kneippenschaft contributions was not to be dealt with by means of a strike, since it is not within the power of the mines to implement changes in this matter. Organised workers would not have started a wage struggle so unprepared. Not so the Poles. Their poverty of speech and unschooled intellect show them no way out of their troubles other than the work stoppage and violence".\(^3\)

The Bochum socialist paper took the same line:

"Unorganised Polish miners, with only partial mastery of our language, imported by the employers and their agents in thousands, have created a strike situation...Social Democracy has no advantage from the ill-considered actions of these unorganised people, and we fully support the appeal of the leadership of the German Mineworkers' Union who call urgently for the strikers to return to work". 1

Polish nationalist and Centre leaders also opposed the stoppage. The meeting which Schröder was to have addressed on 25 June was also to have heard an appeal from Szczotkowski, a leading nationalist. The nationalists were particularly concerned to avoid violence: "In these cases only calm can bring the miners their hoped for wage increases. Anything which might contribute to disturbing the calm should therefore be avoided, and the best way to ensure this is to stay at home instead of standing around curiously on the streets". 2 They issued a direct appeal for calm, motivated, no doubt, by the very bad name which the Poles were winning amongst Germans. 3 Although they sympathised with some of the strikers' aims, and bitterly rejected the unkind characterizations of the Poles in which sections of the German press indulged, the nationalists were embarrassed by the whole affair. The Centre Party too was thrown into considerable embarrassment: they usually counted on Polish votes in elections, yet there were reports that the Dortmund party was considering a programme "for civilizing" the Poles; one Westphalian party leader was reported to have declared: "Do

1. IZF, Volksblatt 29.6.1899; see also Lucas Arbeitsradikalismus pp.261-265.
2. StAB, 450, Wiarius Polski 1.7.1899.
me a favour, fellows, and don't greet me in Herne; I will be pleased to see you again when we have elections. Whether the story is apocryphal or not, it does suggest the discomfort of the Centre in the face of these actions of their actual or potential supporters.

The Herne strike caused particular controversy and concern because of the prominent role of the Polish miners. Nevertheless, this should not blind us to the fact that in its spontaneous and disorganised origin it was typical of the great majority of Ruhr miners' strikes. Above all it was the action of the miners themselves - or at least some of them - taken without the encouragement of their organisations and even against their advice.

The largest strike of all - that of 1905 - showed the same characteristic. It started at Bruchstrasse, situated at Langendreer, to the east of Bochum. Hugo Stinnes had recently bought the mine and his attempts to introduce a more dynamic management style soon produced conflicts. In August 1906 it was alleged that Knepper, the new manager put in by Stinnes, wanted to lengthen the shift. In November there were complaints that Muller was being practiced too vigorously. At a miners' meeting on 27 November there were bitter complaints about fines, deductions and general conditions. It was felt that the Alter Verband was not taking sufficient action and a strong resolution was passed:

1. StAB, h51, Kölische Zeitung 4.7.1899.
2. StAB, h55, Amt Langendreer to KLB 28.1.1905.
3. Hue Bergarbeiter Bd.II p.583.
"Today's meeting strongly condemns the behaviour of the executive of the German Mineworkers' Union in regard to the present conditions of work, and calls on them, if these conditions persist, to resort to the ultimate weapon, the strike. For their part those present commit themselves to ensure that every last miner is organised and to agitate more than hitherto for the union". 1

There was thus already a considerable degree of discontent when on 1 December the management announced that because of major construction work winding time would take longer, with the effect that the overall time spent at the pit would be extended by an hour a day, with no additional payment.2 At this the men refused to work, and elected a commission, including Husemann, the Bochum area union official, to negotiate. An appeal to the Royal Mines Office produced a ruling that a month's notice had to be given before the shift length could be extended. Even so, it was only with difficulty that Husemann and the commission persuaded a meeting of over 1,000 Bruchstrasse miners that the strike should be ended. They eventually agreed to return to work on 7 December, but kept the commission in readiness for any renewed attempt to lengthen the shift.3

Before the end of December, however, the management made it clear that they intended to increase the winding time from 1 February. The Christlicher Gewerkverein (as the Catholic miners' union was now known), the Polish miners' union (which had been founded in 1902) and Husemann

1. IZF, Bergarbeiter Zeitung 17.12.1904. An SPD meeting in Langendreer two days later saw more expressions of discontent over conditions at Bruchstrasse: StAB, h55, Amt Langendreer to KLB 28.1.1905.

2. StAB, h56, Amt Langendreer to KLB 1.12.1904.

for the Alter Verband assured the miners of their support if it should come to a strike, since a lengthened winding time would inevitably open the door to a general increase in working hours.\(^1\) On 7 January, after it had become clear that there was no possibility of reaching agreement, the entire Bruchstrasse labour force stopped work.\(^2\)

The unions now sought to localize the stoppage to Bruchstrasse. On the same day that the Bruchstrasse men decided to strike Ludwig Schröder spoke in Baukau, urging the men at other pits to stay at work.\(^3\) Two days later he and other unionists spoke in Werne:

"All the movement's leaders, especially the union vice-chairman Schröder, did their best to restrain those present from striking, so that the Bruchstrasse strike could be energetically prosecuted. In the end it was decided to work today. But when the decision was announced there were so many cries of 'We strike anyway', and 'We won't let ourselves be led any more up the garden path!' that it seemed quite possible that the strike will hit the Werne pits this morning".\(^4\)

On 9 January the leaders of the four unions (the fourth was the small, liberal, Hirsch-Duncker union) met and issued an appeal to the miners generally to stay at work. Nevertheless, despite the appeals, the strike spread. On 11 January Vollmond, which was situated near Bruchstrasse, came out and the next day other neighbouring pits - Neu Iserlohn, Heinrich Gustav, Amalia and Wallfisch were affected.\(^5\) In fact it was estimated that nearly a quarter of all the Ruhr miners were cut. A conference of delegates from throughout the Ruhr met in Essen

---

1. StAB, L56, Ant Langendreer to KLB 27.12.1904; Polizei Kommissar Dortmund to HPA 1.1.1905.
2. StAB, L56, Amt Langendreer to KLB 7.1.1905.
on the same day and formulated a series of demands to the employers; they appealed to those men still at work to remain there until the demands were answered. This appeal too fell on deaf ears, the strike spread rapidly, reaching a peak on 19 January when 76 per cent of the Ruhr miners were out.

The 1905 strike was thus a further dramatic illustration of the tendency of Ruhr mining strikes to break out without official support and even against the advice of the "leaders". As Hermann Sachse, the Chairman of the Alter Verband, declared at the Essen conference on 12 January: "If anyone has fought against a general strike with all their power, it is us". Other delegates claimed that there was no question of persuading the miners to stay at work. Graf, a delegate from Herne, gave a dramatic account of the difficulties he faced:

"Comrades! I come from the Herne district and must explain here that if today's conference - and the comrades there have set their hopes on today's conference - if this conference now were to declare that we are not to continue the strike, that we want to try to bring the comrades to return to work, comrades, I would not go there and tell them that. I am quite certain of that. I would not be able to do it, I would be torn down from the platform. I have tried to keep the comrades at work, I have told them they will get not a pfennig support if they strike; but this has not bothered them at all. They simply said, 'It has gone on long enough'".

There can be little doubt, in view of the speed with which the strike spread, that his account was reasonably accurate.

The union leaders had reasons, of course, for their caution. At Neu


4. ibid.
Iserlohn Husemann had to defend them: "The executive has been accused of cowardice, but they have only done what was in the interests of the organisation and the comrades". We will return to the question of union aims and tactics in the next chapter. What is significant in the present context is the decidedly "unofficial" character of the strike in its early phase. It was only on January 15, after the employers rejected the unions' demands, that the strike was given official backing.

The course of the strike is well known. The employers refused to negotiate with the unions' joint organising committee, the "Commission of Seven", so they appealed to the Government instead. There was a great deal of public sympathy for the strikers, encouraged by the absence of violence, and the Government were willing to see a compromise. On 27 January, to the indignation of the employers, the Government announced that they were willing to revise the mining laws, limiting overtime and the length of the shift and providing for compulsory workers' committees, the abolition of Hullen, and limits on fines. These concessions and a subsequent promise from the Government of further discussions if the men returned to work, combined with the inability of the unions to support nearly 200,000 men and their families, led the Commission of Seven to recommend in early February that the strike be ended. A delegate meeting on 9 February agreed by 165 votes to 5, and despite protests from some who wanted to continue the strike the vast majority of the miners returned to work the following week. This time

2. See Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung; Kirchhoff Sozialpolitik; Gladen "Streiks"; D. Fricke Der Bergarbeiterstreik von 1905 (Berlin-Ost, 1955).
at least the union leaders were reasonably in tune with the miners. 1

The miners' union showed its hostility towards unofficial strikes once again in 1907. In May of that year the hauliers and other young workers at a number of pits north of Bochum came out on strike. The Alter Verband opposed the strike, on the grounds that a stoppage by a group of largely unorganised workers had no chance of success. At a meeting after the strike had lasted for a week the local union representative, Wilhelm Waterkotte, declared:

"In future such putsches must be avoided. An unorganised mass cannot achieve anything against the mine administration. Stoppages must not occur again without previous consultation with the organisations. Those who have now simply stopped work without any consideration must bear the consequences." 2

It was only the intervention of two other union men which prevented the meeting from adopting a resolution which merely condemned the hauliers. The eventual resolution rejected their precipitate action, but also criticized the pit managements:

"Bearing in mind the large company profits and the rises in the cost of living, the meeting regards the hauliers' demands as justified, but rejects the methods adopted of striking without being organised or consulting the unions. The meeting condemns the behaviour of the management, who in order to preserve their dominance (Herrenstandpunkt) answered the justified demands with sackings and fines. The meeting recommends the workers to join the existing organisations in order successfully to prosecute the economic struggle". 3

On this occasion, like earlier ones, a group of spontaneous strikers had acted independently of their official leaders, and even against their advice.

1. Fricke greatly exaggerates the opposition to the call for a return to work. From 75 per cent on 9 February, the proportion of Ruhr miners away from work was down to 35 per cent on Saturday 11 February, 13 per cent on Monday 13 February and under one per cent on 16 February. Technical reasons accounted for some of the delay. Fricke Bergarbeiterstreik pp.139ff; Jüngst "Der Ausstand der Bergarbeiter" p.10ff.

2. STAL, Landratsamt Gelsenkirchen 40, Eickel police report 17.5.1907.

3. ibid.
The last major strike which affected the Ruhr coal field before the outbreak of war differed from most of those which we have so far considered in that it was deliberately called by three of the four miners' unions. The first suggestion that the unions should unite to prosecute a joint wage claim came from the Alter Verband in the autumn of 1910, but was rejected by the Gewerkverein. In October 1911 a joint meeting was held between all four unions, and Otto Hue for the Alter Verband argued that the spring of 1912 would provide good conditions for a wage demand, particularly since the English miners looked like striking then. The Gewerkverein again opposed the idea, and with the Reichstag election of January 1912 imminent the matter was postponed. In February 1912 a further joint meeting was held at which the Gewerkverein again opposed any campaign on wages, at least until the employers had had a chance to implement the increases which they were promising for the next few months. The Alter Verband, supported by the Poles and the Hirsch-Duncker union, decided to go ahead anyway, and sent demands first to the employers' federation and then to the individual mines: they called for wage increases, the eight-hour shift inclusive of journey time, and other reforms. Meetings were held and leaflets issued in support of the demands - which, it was clear, would be rejected. The Gewerkverein once again expressed its opposition to the campaign, but on 7 March the other unions decided that a strike should be called for 11 March.¹

The strike started well, with half the miners away from work on the first

day, and over 61 per cent on the third. Since the three striking unions' combined membership in the Ruhr was little more than a quarter of the mineworkers, it is clear that the strike call had mobilized many thousands of non-unionists and even perhaps a number of Gewerkverein members. The Gewerkverein, however, continued to oppose the strike, instructed its members to stay at work, and even called on the Government to provide military protection for those wanting to work. The deep division between the striking unions and the Gewerkverein was reflected in conflicts amongst the miners themselves, and there were a considerable number of violent incidents between strikers and non-strikers - a fact which the employers and their sympathisers used to the maximum to win public support. A Government attempt to conciliate having been rejected by the three unions before the strike began, the authorities decided that non-strikers should now be given the maximum protection, and introduced the military. In a situation where the miners were already deeply divided (unlike 1889) this show of strength appears to have encouraged those who were reluctant to strike to return to work and to have discouraged the strikers. By the end of the first week only around half of the miners were still out, and in the second week the strike ebbed from day to day. On 19 March a delegate conference of the three striking unions decided to call the stoppage off, and by 22 March it was over.

The 1912 stoppage - the third "general" strike affecting mines throughout

1. Union membership figures for the Ruhr are printed in Klessmann "Klassensolidarität" p.151.
the Ruhr - thus differed considerably from the majority of miners' strikes in that it was deliberately called and was not a spontaneous stoppage. Only two pits experienced unofficial stoppages before the official strike call was issued, Kaiserstuhl and Scharnhorst, both in the Dortmund area. At both pits the men stopped work on March 1st but while those at Scharnhorst stayed out the Kaiserstuhl men were successfully persuaded by the unions to return to work until the official strike began. When the strike was called it started smoothly and uniformly, with over half the miners stopping work on the same day.

All this was in complete contrast to 1889 and 1905, when first one mine and then another came out, in 1889 without any organisation and in 1905 in clear defiance of them. The very fact that the appeals of the Gewerkverein not to strike found such wide response was in complete contrast to 1905 when similar appeals were largely ignored.

Nevertheless, the 1893 and 1912 strikes were the only ones which started in a deliberate planned way. All the rest were essentially spontaneous stoppages, starting without reference to or even against the advice of official leaders. They spread by groups of strikers touring from pit to pit and where possible persuading their colleagues to join them. In the great majority of cases only a few pits actually joined in the stoppage, but on two occasions spontaneous strikes spread throughout the coal field. Clearly such strikes were the product of widespread and deeply felt concerns. To understand them it is necessary to look more closely at

1. Hue Bergarbeiter II p.710.
2. Lucas compares this procedure, which also appeared during the miners' strikes after 1918, with peasant actions in the 16th century: Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus p.181.
their pattern and the issues which they raised.

Strikes and the trade cycle

One revealing characteristic of miners' strikes was their close relationship with the trade cycle. The virtual absence of marked cyclical fluctuations in the industry in the first half of the nineteenth century may have been an important underlying cause of the industrial peace and the absence of strikes which marked those years. In the second half of the century, however, cyclical fluctuations became one of the major characteristics of the industry, and upswings were increasingly punctuated by strikes.

The first significant strikes occurred in 1868 and especially 1872, when the strike wave affected a number of pits in the Essen-Bochum district and lasted over four weeks; both were years of prosperity and the second came as the great boom which accompanied the foundation of the German state reached its height. During the ensuing depression years, however, strikes to defend miners' living standards, even against very serious attack, were few and relatively insignificant. The Bochum Chamber of Commerce's report for 1887 was typical of these years:

"Relations between workers and employers in our district...have in general been very satisfactory. There have been no significant disputes and equally few stoppages of any extent. Some newspapers have set about the systematic destruction of the good relations which exist between workers and employers, but have had little success. The overwhelming majority of the workers understand very well that such agitation is by no means truly concerned with the workers' wellbeing but rather has party political aims, and that with very

1. This was illustrated by the absence of serious unrest amongst the miners in 1868.

few exceptions the employers of our district are much more concerned for the wellbeing of their workers than are the unscrupulous agitators...." 1

From 1888, however, the economic climate improved and demand for coal and steel increased. This in turn seems to have made the miners less able to "understand" their employers' concern for their wellbeing, for it was in the spring of 1889 that the first great strike occurred. The boom of 1888 to 1891, as we have seen, was accompanied by a quite unprecedented level of labour unrest, with a major strike in the spring of three consecutive years and some more limited ones and threats of strikes in the intervening periods. After 1891, however, the boom ended and there were several years of relative depression. With the exception of the strike of 1893 - which was deliberately called and not spontaneous like the majority of miners' strikes - industrial peace returned to the Ruhr coalfield in these years. The upswing of 1896 to 1901 was accompanied by a number of local strikes and the important Herne strike in 1899. The ending of the boom in 1902 was accompanied by reduced earnings and some lay-offs, but the miners' discontent was not expressed in work stoppages: at Holland in April 1902 union leaders successfully persuaded the men not to strike when changes in the shift arrangements were proposed.2 In Hay forty hauliers stopped work at König Ludwig, near Recklinghausen, but all except five were back at work in two days, and the five were promptly sacked.3 This seems to

1. VWA, HKB Jahresbericht 1887.
2. StAB, h80, RPA to Minister des Innern 2h.11.1902.
3. StAB, h64, RPA to KLB h.5.1902; 7.5.1902.
have been the extent of strike action in protest at what were significant cuts in the miners' standard of living.

The next boon, which lasted from 1903 to 1907, was accompanied by further strikes, most notably the second "general" strike, in 1905. The ending of the boom in 1908 was again accompanied by reduced earnings, but once again there were virtually no strikes. In February 1908 union members in Hordel discussed striking against the wage cuts, but nothing further was heard of it. In March, when the management of the General pit in Weitmar announced a second wage cut in two months, 39 hauliers immediately stopped work and the next day some 60 hauliers and pony minders refused to work. They elected a delegation to negotiate, but the chief overman and pit manager refused to talk until they had returned to work. The older workers did not join the stoppage, and the local union official called on the youths to resume their work. The day after the strike began they went back to work without any concessions, and no-one gave notice when the threatened wage cuts were implemented the following month. A similarly brief and futile stoppage by some hauliers occurred at Präsident on 20 March.

These minor rumblings appear to have been the only attempts, in the Bochum area at least, to use the strike weapon against the cuts in living standards which followed the ending of the economic boom. It was only

1. StAB, h6h, Ant Hordel to KLB 5.2.1908.
2. StAB, h6h, Ant Weitmar to KLB 16, 17, 18.3.1908; IISG, Volksblatt 16, 17, 18.3.1908; StAB, l5h, Ant Weitmar to KLB 8.3.1908.
3. IISG, Volksblatt 20.3.1908.
with the improved economic conditions which began to return from 1910 that strikes appeared to be a serious possibility again. It is from that year, as we have seen, that the discussions between the various unions which eventually led to the 1912 strike began.

While strikes were scattered over much of the period under review they thus occurred predominantly in periods of economic boom conditions. This indeed was sometimes adduced by employers as evidence of the unscrupulous cynicism of strikers. The Bochum Chamber of Commerce called the 1889 wage demands "completely unjustified" on the grounds that in the previous year wages had risen rather more than coal prices. Dr. Schulz, the Bochum representative in the Prussian House of Deputies, declared that the inquiry which followed the strike had shown that "need" was not the cause. The management of the Hibernia pit tried in 1899 to persuade the young strikers to return to work by pointing out that their pay had risen by over twenty per cent since 1893. Historians have also been keen to deny that economic need lay at the root of the strikes:

"Even less than in 1889 can one say that it was a current general economic need which drove the miners to strike in 1905. Against this argument one can observe that the strike broke out at a time when wages were rising".

1. The main economic booms from 1888 onwards were accompanied by strike waves affecting other coal fields and other industries both in Germany and in Europe generally: see Ritter and Tenfelde "Durchbruch der Preisen Gewerkschaften" pp.68-85; Schofer "Formation of a modern labor force" pp.156-158; Shorter and Tilly "Strikes in France" chapter V; Hobsbawn "Labouring Men".


Kollmann observes:

"This strike [1905] also broke out, like that of 1889, at a time when the living and working conditions of the miners were not getting noticeably worse. It was not economic need but a series of the most various factors which led even in 1905 to a steadily rising excitement, which came to expression in the 1905 strike". 1

The most systematic discussion of the theory that "misery" was the chief cause of miners' strikes is that by Crew, who concludes:

"Strikes did not break out when wages hit the bottom of a low trough, as the misery theory might lead us to expect. Indeed, both the 1889 and 1912 strikes occurred after income had been steadily improving for a long time. The 1905 strike followed a sharp, but only partial, relapse of wages which were recovering from a far more serious low reached in 1903. Thus, miners struck when their economic situation was improving, or, more rarely, when the prospect of improvement seemed suddenly threatened, but not when material deprivation was greatest". 2

It is clearly the case that miners' strikes did not stem from "misery", if by that we imply that they took place when the miners were worst off. Nevertheless, when we come to analyse the issues raised by strikers we shall see that this does not dispose of the very real and pressing economic factors behind the strikes. The very existence of such a marked pattern linking strikes with economic booms - particularly when the strikes were overwhelmingly unplanned and spontaneous in their nature - suggests that important economic factors were indeed at work.

The issues raised by strikers

The demands made by strikers offer an important key to understanding the nature of mining strikes in the Ruhr and the problems which underlay


2. Crew Industry and Community pp. 301-307. Average wages levelled off but do not appear to have fallen significantly before the 1905 strike: Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p. 149.
then. An element of symbolism may be present, of course, in strike
demands so that they cannot necessarily be taken entirely at their face
value as an accurate reflection of the strikers' real concerns. Never­
theless, it is likely that this element will be considerably reduced in
disorganised and spontaneous stoppages such as those characteristic of
the Ruhr mines; and the symbolic or formal element is likely to affect
the precise terms of the demand rather than the basic issues raised.
When the same issues are raised again and again by unorganised groups
of strikers it seems fair to attach considerable weight to them as a
reasonable indication of the concerns which were uppermost in the
strikers' minds.¹

On many occasions the miners stopped work first and only set about
formulating demands later. This happened at Neu Iserlohn in 1889.²
In March 1890 men at Dahlhausen Tiefbau refused to work, but did not
explain what it was they wanted. They were told to go home if they
would not work, and it was only later that the local union officer,
Weber, explained that the men were not satisfied with an announcement
that wages would be increased from 1 July and instead wanted them
raised immediately.³ When the Hannover men joined the 1891 strike
they gave no reasons.⁴ Similarly in 1899 the Kölnische Zeitung

¹. Shorter and Tilly suggest, "the poorest way of knowing what workers
want in strikes is to go by what they say they want". While correctly
warning that strike demands need careful interpretation, they are surely
wrong simply to dismiss this important evidence, particularly if it
shows internal consistency and can be explained by reference to other
factors (e.g. the trade cycle). Shorter and Tilly Strikes in France p.66.

². StAB, h36, Neu Iserlohn to KLB 9.5.1889.
³. StAB, h62, Landrat Hattingen to RPA 1.3.1890.
⁴. BA, 20/Ah5 "Geschichte der Zeche Hannover".
reported:

"The Polish workers do not give any notice, they put no demands, they give no real reasons for their behaviour, they simply do not work and thus - basta! This is an example of the impudence and the quiet stupidity which accompanies all Polish affairs.... They do not know what they want". 1

In 1905 the men at Carl Friedrich Erbstollen stopped work on 10 January, but their spokesmen gave no reasons other than solidarity with the Bruchstrasse men; their own demands were only formulated later. 2

This lack of articulation is not surprising in view of the sudden and unplanned nature of many strikes. Nevertheless, in virtually all strikes demands were made either at the very beginning or after a short delay.

The 1889 strike started with calls for higher wages. At Präsident the men stopped work when a request for a 20 per cent pay increase was rejected; at Franziska Tiefbau a deputation of three hewers called for a 30 per cent increase, and when it was refused the men declined to start work. 3 As the strike got underway more detailed demands were formulated. The Bochum Landrat reported that at most of the meetings the chief demands were for wage increases of 20 to 25 per cent and the eight-hour shift inclusive of winding time; the other demands were "relatively minor side-issues". 4 At Shamrock, Constantin and Lothringen demands were raised for a general 20 per cent wage increase; at Hannibal only 15 per cent was called for; at Hasenwinkel too there were demands

2. STAI, Oberbergamt Dortmund 18h3, Bergrevier Hattingen to Oberbergamt 10.1.1905.
3. StAB, h36, Präsident to KLB 7.5.1889, Bürgermeister Tatten to KLB 9.5.1889.
4. StAB, h36, KLB to RFA 11.5.1889.
for higher pay, and those who made them were sacked; at Dackerhulde 20 per cent was demanded. The north Bochum Antmann reported that the miners in his district were demanding the eight-hour shift inclusive of winding time, wage increases of 15 per cent and the delivery of timber to the coal face; the Hannover men were also demanding a limit to overtime working. At a meeting of the Hibernia miners demands were made for a general 15 per cent pay increase with specified averages for the various grades of worker, the eight-hour shift inclusive of winding time, the delivery of timber to the coal face, restrictions on fines and more information about them, specific dates for the fixing of piece-rate agreements, the abolition of overtime and the abolition of Sunday work. At Siebenplaneten the demands were for higher wages, the inclusive eight-hour shift, abolition of overtime except in emergency, and a free truck of coal per month for every married miner. At virtually all the Gelsenkirchen meetings the demands were for "15 per cent increases of all wages and the eight-hour shift inclusive of winding time."

The issues of higher wages and shorter hours thus dominated over all other demands. When the three strikers' delegates had their audience with the Kaiser they emphasized particularly the latter issue: Ludwig Schröder explained to the Kaiser, "We demand what we have inherited from

1. StAB, Ah2, Complaints of workers to commission of inquiry, summer 1889.
2. StAB, h36, Ant Bochum I to KLB 7.5.1889.
4. STAJ., Oberpräsidium 2828 Bd.2, Landrat Gelsenkirchen to Oberpräsident 9.5.1889.
our fathers, namely the eight-hour shift. We attach no importance to wage increases."¹ This last statement appears to contrast rather sharply with the evident importance of the wages issue in precipitating the strike.

The issues which had been raised in 1889 reappeared again and again in subsequent disputes. In January 1890 the newly formed miners' union sent a list of demands to the employers:

1. General wage increases of 50 per cent.
2. Eight-hour shifts including winding time: "as long as the length of the shift is not exactly eight-hours this will remain a constant source of dispute".
3. No overtime shifts except in case of emergency: "the present practice of mine officials calling upon hauliers, officials, pony minders, repair workers etc. to work overtime shifts is a form of indirect pressure and leads to persistent conflicts".
4. Abolition of Kohlenabauge - the system whereby hewers were prevented from earning excessively high wages.
5. Wages to be paid four times monthly instead of twice.²

In the subsequent agitation before the strike of April 1890 these demands were frequently modified at miners' meetings. Nevertheless, the basic issues were commonly the same: wage increases were virtually always demanded in one form or another; at some pits the demand was for more for the lower paid, while at others minimum wages for the various categories

² StAB, 462.
of worker was the goal. The eight-hour shift was another common demand. The *Hullen* system was criticised: a meeting of delegates from Constantin, Shamrock, Hannibal and Hannover demanded that the discounting of "impure" trucks should be supervised by a workers' committee, and the Carolinenglick men made the same demand. The Vollmond men called for the delivery of timber to the coal face, separate cages for men and ponies, the abolition of all fines and permission to hold meetings on mine property in addition to minimum wages for hewers. At some mines the position of the miners' delegates was raised: at General, Constantin, and perhaps other pits the management were called on to recognise them as the miners' official representatives with the right to speak on their collective behalf.¹

1891 saw many of the same demands. In February the local union chairman in Herne declared that demands should be put to the owners again, with the emphasis on shorter hours and higher wages.² Two weeks later a delegate meeting drew up a list of demands, calling for the eight-hour shift including winding time, no overtime without the permission of workers' committees, abolition of maximum earnings restrictions and the introduction of workers' regulation of *Hullen*, general wage increases, the reinstatement of sacked workers, no further sackings without the permission of workers' committees, and more workers' control of the *Kapital*.³ Here all the old demands reappeared, with the exception

1. StAB, l62; StAB, l61, Constantin delegates to Zeche Constantin der Grosse 23.2.1890.
2. StAB, l61, Amt Bochum I to KLB 3.2.1891.
3. StAB, l63, Kohle und Eisen 18.2.1891.
that instead of the position of the miners' delegates being emphasized
the stress was now on workers' committees - a proposal first put forward
by liberal parliamentarians during the 1889 strike.¹ These demands
seem to have formed the basis of most of the points raised by the
strikers in April.²

The 1893 strike was called, as we have seen, in solidarity with the Saar
miners, and much of the public discussion was around this issue.³ But
the old issues were not forgotten. Immediately after the strike began,
several demands were sent to the employers:

1. The eight-hour shift inclusive of winding time.
2. 25 per cent wage increases.
3. Repeal of the newly promulgated work rules.
4. Reinstatement of sacked workers and no new disciplinary measures.
5. Recognition of workers' committees and free elections to them.⁴

Nothing seems to have come of this list of demands, but their similarity
to earlier demands - particularly the pride of place accorded to the
eight-hour shift and better pay - is clear.

Wages were the dominant issue in several of the small strikes in the
later 1890's. The strikes at Constantin in 1896 and Holland in 1897
were both on this issue.⁵ The 1899 Herne strike, although triggered

¹ Kirchhoff Sozialpolitik pp.61-63.
² StAB, h±7, Extra-Blatt der Zeitung der deutschen Bergleute 28.4.1891.
³ StAB, h±8, Fliesheet.
⁴ StAB, h±8, RPA to KLB 6.2.1893.
⁵ StAB, h±7, KLB to RPA 2h.4.1896; StAB, h±9, RPA to Minister des
Innern 9.11.1897.
off by changes in Knappschaft contributions, was essentially about the pay of the young hauliers. On the other hand, it was the question of the hours of work - the number of overtime shifts and the length of the "normal" shift - which led to short strikes at von der Heydt and Barillon in June, 1900, and almost to one at Holland in 1902.\(^1\) Extension of the length of the "normal" shift was also the issue in strikes at Baaker Hulde and Oberhausen in 1903, and precipitated the dispute at Bruchstrasse late in 1904, which led to the 1905 strike.\(^2\)

The 1905 strike was the occasion for the re-emergence of the full list of miners' demands. Even at Bruchstrasse the strikers called not only for the old shift lengths, but also for minimum wage levels, the creation of a workers' committee to negotiate and settle disputes, and better treatment of the men by mine officials.\(^3\) At many pits the miners presented long lists of demands: at Shamrock thirteen points were raised and at Siebenplaneten fifteen.\(^4\) The central delegate meeting on 12 January made fourteen demands.\(^5\) The chief issues remained the same: the eight-hour shift inclusive of winding time, the reduction or abolition of overtime, higher wages, the abolition of Hullen, and the creation of elected workers' committees and/or workers' representatives with some supervisory functions. The delegates at the

1. StAB, h53, KLB to RPA 7.6.1900; StAB, h80, RPA to Minister des Innern 24.11.1902.
2. IGBE, AI 16, Verband der deutschen Bergleute Jahresbericht 1903.
3. StAB, h56, Ant Langendreer to KLB 7.1.1905.
4. STAB, Oberbergamt Dortmund 1813, Bergrevier Mitten to Oberbergamt 13.1.1905; Bergrevier Herne to Oberbergamt 13.1.1905.
5. WJA, K2 213.
meeting of 12 January also called for recognition of the unions, although this demand was only repeated at some of the individual mines. The miners' chief concerns emerge clearly: they wanted shorter hours and more pay, and they were angered by the arbitrary use of power by the mine officials, most obviously in the practice of Nullen. The demands therefore centred on proposals to improve matters in these three areas, both by immediate changes and by instituting lasting channels through which the miners would be able to express their views and exercise some control over certain management practices.

Later strikes were fought over the same or similar issues. The 1907 hauliers' strike was over pay. The final major strike before the outbreak of war, in 1912, saw a conventional list of demands: wages should be raised by 15 per cent, and the shift - including winding time - should not exceed eight hours; overtime should not be allowed except in emergencies; in addition there should be reforms of the system of paying wages and of giving notice in mine-owned housing; there should be some control by the workers' committees over fines; the Knappschaft should be reformed; new arbitration courts should be established to settle disputes; the current labour exchange system needed reform; and non-alcoholic drinks should be provided at all mines. Beyond these demands lay on this occasion an implicit demand for union recognition.

We can broadly distinguish three basic demands behind all the various specific ones which were raised during miners' strikes. One - not

necessarily the most important - was for better pay. This might take the form of a demand for an across-the-board percentage increase, or it might be presented in terms of a number of minimum earnings figures for specified categories of mine worker; it might also take a more obscure form, such as the fairly frequent demand for timber to be delivered to the coal face - thus relieving hewers of this chore (for which no additional payment was made) and allowing them more time to cut coal and earn money. The demand for the abolition of kannen may also have been to some extent a wage demand, since many miners were perhaps more conscious of their immediate loss of earnings which followed from it than the probable effects of any alternative system - which would also result in similar or even greater losses of earnings. Crew has argued that the miners showed little interest in wage demands, wanting merely a subsistence level of earnings and had little notion of the possible advantages to them from higher earnings. The 1912 strike, he argues, "showed that improving wages, defensively or offensively, was one of the least popular planks around which a strike could be organised". The persistence of wage demands, sometimes clearly associated with an appreciation that their employers were enjoying growing profits; the fact that the demands were often for very considerable increases; and the fact that wages clearly formed a central issue in strike after strike, suggest that Crew underestimates the miners' interest in this matter. The fact that they were also interested in shorter hours in no way invalidates their very great concern for higher pay.

1. It is interesting that most of the protests at the epidemic of worm disease which swept the Ruhr pits in the early 1900's were not at the poor sanitary arrangements which caused the disease but at the compulsory treatment which resulted in the loss of several days' earnings.

The second major issue which was raised in strike after strike was for shorter hours of work. This had two main expressions: one was the constantly repeated demand for the eight-hour shift inclusive of winding time, and the second was for the abolition or severe restriction of overtime.¹

Demands for higher pay and shorter hours were generally fairly clearly expressed and explicit. A third group of demands, less clearly defined but almost as commonly present, related to the miners' desire for reform of the manner in which the mines were run. This issue could take a number of forms. At its most simple level it was expressed in the demand for "humane treatment" from the mine officials. The hostility towards Hullen was largely an expression of resentment at the arbitrary acts of mine officials which the system entailed. Calls for the reform of the systems of discipline and punishments also reflected the miners' resentment at the unfettered and often arbitrary power exercised particularly by junior mine officials. In a number of strikes, however, there were more far-reaching demands for the creation of permanent institutional channels through which the miners could bring their grievances to the attention of the management and have them settled through some form of collective discussion, rather than depending on the whims of mine officials. This general desire took various forms:

¹. In view of the clear and repeated importance of this issue it is extraordinary that Stearns can write: "German miners rarely raised questions of hours of work in their strikes, though their working day was two hours longer than that in France and Britain. Their docility in this matter was due to the fact that over half of them were freshly in from the countryside". P.H. Stearns "Adaptation to Industrialization: German workers as a Test Case" in Central European History 1970 p.310.
it might be limited to one specific area, as in the demand for the right of elected miners to check on the operation of the [illegible] system or on mine safety. But in many strikes - as we have seen - it took more far-reaching forms, such as the demand for the establishment of workers' committees, or for recognition of the miners' delegates or the trade unions. These demands were always strongly opposed by the employers, who saw them as an infringement of the rights of owners to manage their property. Nevertheless, the demands were not very radical in their implications: as we shall see, the Government was willing to compromise and give the miners concessions on some of these matters. The essential demand was for a reform of management style, replacing a largely authoritarian and arbitrary system with one where blatantly arbitrary acts were prevented and where the miners had a continuing voice in the general affairs of the mine.1

The prominence of these demands suggests that despite the fact that mining strikes took place in the main during periods of relative prosperity, they were prompted by very real and immediate concerns to do with the miners' wages and experience of work. To some extent, of course, the reason for the concentration of the strikes during economic upswings was due to negative factors - the fact that during recessions "trouble makers" were liable to be dismissed with only limited prospects of finding alternative employment elsewhere. Miners were well aware from

the shortening of hours and the squeeze on earnings that the onset of
a recession put them in a vulnerable position. Work stoppages during
recessions would not necessarily be unwelcome to employers who were in
any event keeping shifts going more with the aim of preserving their
labour force against an anticipated recovery than for immediate
financial return. Recessions were therefore marked by an absence of
strike activity and a general tightening of belts.

One important factor behind the strike outbursts which marked economic
upswings was simply the ending of these constraints. The signs that
the owners were beginning to need the miners just as much as or even
more than the men needed the owners were clear: men began to be hired
instead of dismissed; hours were lengthened instead of cut; increased
output became the main aim; and both profits and wages began to rise.
Rising profits were reported in the local papers and signalled to the
miners that better days had arrived. In such an atmosphere the'
earlier willingness to grin and bear hard times simply evaporated.

The onset of a boom also produced certain positive features which
couraged the outbreak of strikes. One obvious feature of all up-
swings was an increase in the hours which the miners were expected to
work. Instead of free shifts they were subjected to various forms of
pressure to extend the length of the "normal" shift and to work overtime

1. See chapter 4 above.

2. StAB, bh1, Die Post 1.9.1889; Gladen "Streiks" p.119.
afterwards. Shifts of one-and-a-quarter, one-and-a-half or even twice the normal length became common, and although this may have been welcomed by some for the extra earnings which resulted, the drawbacks in terms of simple physical exhaustion were obvious. Miners also began to wonder whether shorter hours would not provide the same higher earnings by forcing up the price of coal and by inducing greater efficiency. It is not hard to understand how issues of overtime and the hours of work formed a constant source of conflict during booms and played so prominent a part in strikes.

Miners naturally hoped and expected that an improved demand for coal and rising profits would result in substantial improvements in wages. Here again, however, the onset of the boom could result in disappointment. As we saw in the last chapter, earnings did rise with the improved economic situation. But to some extent these higher earnings were the result of longer hours of work rather than from improved basic rates; there might be a delay before wage rates themselves followed profits upwards; and rising retail prices eliminated some of the value of improvements. The effect was often therefore to whet the miners' appetite for improvement rather than to satisfy it.

One particular feature of the wages system which played a particular part in precipitating disputes and strikes during economic upswings was the discrepancy which soon became apparent between the position of the

1. See chapter 1 above.
2. Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.303-305.
hewers and that of the other mineworkers on set shift rates of pay. As we saw in the last chapter, hewers' earnings were fairly responsive to cyclical fluctuation through their monthly wage negotiations and their ability to move from one pit to another to exploit favourable economic circumstances. Workers on shift rates, however, found it more difficult to secure increases, since once rates were set there was no particular mechanism for changing them. Job-changing by young shift paid workers, hauliers, pony minders and others, was not unknown: in 1899 we hear that while many pits around the Herne area were raising their shift rates, at Siebenplaneten and Neu Iserlohn the rates had not risen; the result was that, "individual hauliers and pony lads are giving notice in order to seek work at those pits which have given wage increases". Nevertheless, there were difficulties which limited the young miners' ability to use job-changing as a means of bidding up their pay. The very fact that they were paid on standard rates made it easier for the pits in an area to ensure that they all offered much the same. And the fact that hauliers were in effect serving an apprenticeship, with the aim of becoming hewers eventually, could act as an important tie to their pit: if they moved they risked having to serve a full period as a haulier all over again at the new pit.

The effect was that the wages of hauliers and the other shift paid workers were less responsive to cyclical fluctuations than those of the hewers. While this worked to their advantage during recessions, when

1. StAB, h59, Ant Langendreer to KIB 27.7.1899.
2. STA!, Frankfurter Zeitung 11.2.1912.
their earnings remained relatively buoyant compared to those of the hewers, during booms they soon found that they were being left behind and had no particular mechanism which they could exploit to secure improvements. In the two years from the spring of 1902, the low point of the recession of the early 1900's, hewers' earnings rose on average by 5.3 per cent, while the wages of hauliers and other shift paid underground workers rose (from a lower starting point) by 4.1 per cent.

The onset of economic booms thus produced particular frustrations over pay amongst the young miners, who felt that they were not benefitting from the general improvement to the same extent as their older colleagues. In the absence of any bargaining mechanism they were particularly willing simply to stop work and strike. No doubt youthful impetuousness and their absence of family responsibilities also played their part in making them particularly willing to come out on strike.

The result was that in many Ruhr mining strikes it was the young underground workers who played a particularly important and active role. The sporadic stoppages in the last days of April and the first days of May 1889, which heralded the great strike of that year, were all the

1. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.149; see chapter 6 above.

2. Tenfelde notes the important role of hauliers in many mining strikes after 1877, but describes their actions as "apparently unmotivated". He does not consider the relative inflexibility of their wages (although this may not have lain behind the 1877 strikes, which occurred during the depression). Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.513-514.
actions of hauliers, pony minders and other young underground mine-
workers. It was the refusal by the managements of Hibernia and
Rheinelbe und Alma to negotiate with them that led to the unrest in
Gelsenkirchen which in turn sparked off rioting and the introduction of
troops. At Franziska Tiefbau, "the young workers were the first who
stayed away from work, and the older ones then followed them". At
Vollmond the main complaints before the strike had come from the
hauliers, who earned only 2.00 to 2.20 marks per shift. The Werne
Amtmann reported:

"The youthful elements made themselves very conspicuous in the
first days of the strike, until they were pushed into the back­
ground by the older miners. An attempted strike by the young
workers would be quite hopeless if they did not know that the
older ones stood behind them".

The Amtmann for north Bochum reinforced his colleagues view:

"The relatively few young people employed at the pits here were
hardly in a position to create a strike of the extent and
generality of that which did in fact take place. It is certainly
true that the wages movement started amongst the young hauliers,
pony minders and the lowest paid, and that an increase had to be
given to these people early in March and April; but the strike
itself had deeper causes and they are not to be found in the heads
of these youths. On the other hand it is true that the young lads
proved themselves particularly active as spokesmen and strike
propagators once it had broken out, while the older, more settled
workers, particularly those with a family and their own home or a
company house, were more restrained".

The 1889 strike was not the only one to start amongst the young mine-
workers. The 1891 stoppage also appears to have originated, at some
pits at least, amongst the hauliers and pony minders, with their older
colleagues joining in only later. These strikes were unusual, how-

1. StAB, hh1, Bürgermeister Mitten to KLB 30.9.1889.
2. StAB, hh2.
3. StAB, hh1, Ant Werne to KLB 26.9.1889.
4. StAB, hh1, Ant Bochum to KLB 24.9.1889.
5. StAB, hh7, Gendarmerie Rose to KLB 23.11.1891.
ever, in the extent to which the hewers were willing to follow the youngsters' lead. A different but fairly common response was shown in 1896 when hauliers at Constantin stopped work and demanded an increase in their shift rates: the older hewers were unsympathetic; some fathers ordered their sons to return to work, and the pit manager was able to put hewers onto hauliers' work. The 1899 "Herne strike" was also essentially the work of the younger workers, although this aspect was obscured by the attention given to the prominent role of the Poles. The strike occurred at a time when some but not all pits in the area had raised their shift rates of pay, and it was immediately followed by further increases. Some commentators recognized the important role of the young workers: "On not one of the pits affected by the strike have the hewers put any demands, only the young hauliers and pony minders whose wage is on average only 2.50 to 3.00 marks", reported one miner from the strike district. The Kölnische Zeitung recognized that the young miners had a case, although the paper felt that little could be done for them:

"It may be conceded that a wage of about 60 marks, which many young Poles here earn in the month after deductions, often cannot suffice with today's high prices of food and lodging for a satisfactory standard of living. But our entire industry is not structured to provide young assistant workers with the same wages as older, experienced men."

The Bochum Landrat tried to appeal to the strikers' families to exercise a moderating influence: "I urgently call on the sensible older miners, "

1. StAB, h63, Amt Bochum I to KLB 2h.25.h.1896; STA., Regierung Arnsberg I Nr.7h, KLB to RPA 2h.h.1896.

2. Königsgrube, Constantin, Friedrich der Grosse, Hannibal and Lothringen were amongst the pits which immediately raised their shift rates for hauliers etc. when the strike broke out; Hannover and von der Heydt were amongst those which had already given one increase but following the strike granted another. StAB, h50.

3. StAB, h51, General Anzeiger, Dortmund 5.7.1899.

particularly the German family heads of those who have for no good reason stopped work, to smooth the way to order with me and to lead the imprudent youth through word and example back to their duty". ¹

A number of the smaller localized Ruhr mining strikes were primarily the action of these young underground mine-workers: those at von der Heydt and Barillon in 1900 and at König Ludwig in 1902 are examples. One of the clearest expressions of the frustrations felt by these workers occurred during the peak boom years of 1906 and 1907. Once again the hewers' earnings were running ahead of those of the other underground workers.² In March 1906 the workers' committee (newly formed in the aftermath of the 1905 strike; it was officially not supposed to discuss wages) at Constantin IV/V called for a general wage increase, particularly for the shift paid workers. The pit manager, Berg, claimed that an across the board increase was impossible, but that he would see if it might be possible to put the hauliers onto piece rates "so that with a corresponding production they could earn more than hitherto".³ In August of the same year in Hordel "a mass demonstration for an increase in the hauliers' wages took place, without disturbance or success".⁴ In October the workers' committee at Lansfeld expressed satisfaction with the current piece rates at the mine but reported that there were many calls for pay increases for shift


2. Between the first quarter of 1906 and the first quarter of 1907 hewers' earnings rose by 11.2 per cent in the Ruhr as a whole, while those of other underground workers rose by 12.1 per cent. Koch Bergarbeiter–benennung p.149.


workers. In the same month a strike occurred at Franziska Tiefbau near Hitten: on Saturday 6 October six pony minders refused to work, and the next Monday 13 hauliers and pony minders were out. They returned to work the next day when pay increases were promised, but when the promises were apparently withdrawn the following day they ceased work again. The strike lasted for a week, though the outcome is not known.

These rumblings showed the latent discontent amongst young shift paid workers, but it did not come to a head until the following Spring. In May 1907 hauliers at a number of pits came out on strike, first in the Recklinghausen area and then around Bochum and Gelsenkirchen. At Hannover, two days after the strike started near Recklinghausen, 92 of the 151 hauliers on the afternoon shift refused to start work without a promise of a 50 Pfennig wage increase. This was refused and the strike spread: the next day saw over 200 on strike at the pit and a number of other mines in the neighbourhood were affected. In all some 17 pits and around 2,500 workers were involved in the strike. The hewers, however, remained at work - at some pits doing hauliers' work. As we have seen, the strike was vigorously opposed by the miners' unions, and in the end it achieved little: at Hannover 25 strikers were sacked.

1. StAB, h6h, Kansfeld to KLB 29.10.1906.
2. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 11, 17.10.1906.
3. StAB, h6h, Ant Hordel to KLB 11, 15.5.1907; IGB AI 19 Bergarbeiterverband Jahresbericht 1907/08.
4. StAB, h6h, Ant Hordel to KLB 15.5.1907.
and although some pits gave pay increases others did not. During the remainder of 1907 shift wages continued to rise, but still somewhat slower than the hewers' earnings.

It is clear that there were very real and important grounds for the prominence of wage demands in miners' strikes, and that the dynamics of wage movements, particularly the disappointed hopes of major improvements and the relative stagnation of the hauliers' pay, had much to do with the concentration of strikes during economic upswings. The increasing conflict over the manner in which the pits were run, the resentment at the arbitrary acts of overmen and managers, also naturally increased during booms, when the pressure on the miners to increase their output, to work harder and to work longer hours was at its most intense. It was during periods of greatest pressure at work that the grounds for industrial conflict were at their most intense.

Success and failure

Fining strikes emerged spontaneously from the experience of work and represented one of the most important means at the miners' disposal of seeking changes and relief. Yet how appropriate were they as an effective means of protest? Did they succeed in their aims or were the doubts of union leaders about their usefulness well-founded?

1. The reasons for union opposition to wildcat strikes will be discussed in the next chapter. It may be that they were particularly unsympathetic to hauliers' strikes through the latters' relative lack of representation, compared with the hewers, in the union membership and leadership.
An essential element in any effective mining strike was the achievement of a very broad degree of solidarity. Miners were not generally in the position of skilled workers in a technically advanced and interdependent work setting, where action by even a few strategically placed workers can have a serious impact on the working of an entire plant or even industry. The degree of pressure which a mining strike put on the employer - particularly an employer who owned several pits or was backed by an effective employers' association - depended very much on the scale of the stoppage: a limited strike caused him only limited and superable difficulties.

The 1889 and 1905 strikes demonstrated that the miners were capable of a very high degree of strike solidarity. On both occasions at the peak of the strike around 80 per cent of Ruhr mineworkers were out.\(^1\) Social and ideological differences were ignored. The common resentments of the commonly experienced work place overcame the deep divisions of geographical origin, nationality, religion and politics which characterized the Ruhr working class. This unity was impressive by any standards and was in sharp contrast to the behaviour of most other groups of workers: in the Ruhr, for instance, the second major occupational group, the metal workers, never struck work on any significant scale during the entire pre-war period.\(^2\)

1. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.112-113. The proportion of strikers was greater amongst underground workers: in 1905 90 per cent were out at the peak of the strike; UMA, K2 213.

2. For a discussion of the industrial passivity of the metal workers in the Ruhr see Crew Industry and Community chapter V. The building trades were perhaps the most industrially militant group of workers in the Ruhr after the miners.
The high degree of solidarity achieved in 1889 and 1905 should not blind us, however, to recognizing how untypical they were of miners' strikes. Even in 1889 itself the high peak of solidarity lasted only a few days and was succeeded by a drift back to work. In 1905, by contrast, some three quarters of the Ruhr miners stayed out for three weeks until the strike was officially called off. Nevertheless, even in 1905 there was a perceptible drift back, particularly in the last week of the strike, and many feared that if the stoppage lasted much longer the drift back was bound to increase, especially in the absence of any real strike pay. The official ending of the strike was overwhelmingly accepted. The possibility of sustaining a strike for a matter of months — as happened on several occasions in the British mining industry — never seems to have been regarded as a serious possibility. Other strikes signally failed to achieve effective solidarity. In 1912 there was a sixty per cent turnout, but this lasted only three days before a major return to work began. Even this degree of support was unusual: in 1891 thirteen per cent of Ruhr miners stopped work, and in 1893 fourteen per cent. Other strikes won even less support.

There were many reasons for this. Sometimes, as we have seen, the hewers were unwilling to stop work in support of their younger colleagues, and even took on their work. In 1889 suspicion between Germans and Poles played a part in limiting the strike. Political and denominational

1. Mining strikes in Britain lasted four months (1811 and 1893), six weeks (1912) and ten months (1926).

2. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.146. Crew rather misleadingly suggests that the hostility between strikers and non-strikers in 1912 was an expression of miners' solidarity. It was rather the expression of a lack of solidarity: when real solidarity was present (e.g., in 1889 and 1905) there were remarkably few violent incidents. Crew Industry and Community p.272.
divisions were also important - most notably in 1912. Threats of
dismissal and reprisals from employers and the lack of fall-back
resources of many miners undoubtedly weakened their ability and will to
stick out.¹ Most fundamental, however, was simply the size and rapid
growth of the coal field and labour force within it. The solidarity
born of face to face relations and personal knowledge which could exist
in a small mining village was hard to recreate in a coal field with (in
1912) approaching 100,000 miners. The constant influx of newcomers,
most with no previous experience of the industry or the area, and the
constant movement of people within the district itself militated
against the creation of strong and settled social bonds which might
sustain families through long periods of industrial action. Tenfelde
has noted that in early mining strikes solidarity and willingness to
strike was stronger in the traditional mining districts rather than in
the new and rapidly expanding pits to the north; the new immigrants,
despite their undoubted frustrations and discontent, simply did not know
how to express their wishes through such disciplined forms as the
strike or the organisation.² Immigrants - notably Poles - certainly
participated in the 1889 and subsequent strikes, and their prominence
in 1899 fostered German prejudices about their alleged disruptive
tendencies. Nevertheless, when the authorities enquired into Polish
participation in the 1889 and 1905 strikes they found that the Poles had
generally not played a particularly important role.³ The effect of

¹ The 1905 strike led to a marked increase in poverty:ucas
Arbeiterradi Kalismus p.127.

² Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte pp.511-511.

³ StDB, III, 155.
rapid social change and social divisions was to weaken rather than to strengthen the solidarity of miners. Strike after strike failed to spread from the relatively limited geographical district - or even the original pit - in which it had begun. More extended and sustained solidarity was exceptional rather than normal in mining strikes.

On occasions the strikers won sympathy and even support from beyond the ranks of the working class. Small traders who depended on the miners for their custom naturally welcomed higher wages and hoped that concessions would enable an early resumption of work. In 1912 the Bochum shopkeepers appealed to the Chamber of Commerce (of which they were members, but which was dominated by the local industrialists) not to penalise those miners who had stayed away from work through fear rather than through their own wish; the Chamber of Commerce had to remind them: "The trader is not only a salesman but also an employer", and commented that they were frequently hard towards their own employees.¹

Bourgeois sympathy with striking miners was not limited to those who had a direct financial stake in the pit workers' prosperity. In 1889 the Westfälischer Journ reported that most of the press was sympathetic to the strikers: "The latter have won respect through their prudence and orderliness".² The Bochumer Zeitung reported:

"In bourgeois circles many hope that the miners' efforts will have success, and this sympathy will not diminish so long as the strikers rigorously avoid any excesses. In Gelsenkirchen a Citizens

1. MIA, K2 199, Correspondence between Kaufmännischer Verein Bochum and HKB 21.3.1912.

2. STAI, Oberpräsidium 2826 Bd.3, Westfälischer Journ 13.5.1889.
Committee has been formed to support the strike. Significant contributions have already been given, ten thousand marks from Herr Bischoff the transport entrepreneur. This deserves imitation!

The intransigence of the employers was frequently criticized. In 1905 many bourgeois papers were critical of their mine-owners' stance, and at the University of Bonn a public strike fund was launched which raised a million marks; even employers from other industries criticized the Bergbauliche Verein. Even when there was little sympathy with the strike itself, heavy-handed over-reaction by the authorities could arouse bourgeois protest; in 1893 the widespread arrests of local activists were criticized:

"The bitterness which one finds amongst the workers about this is beginning to reach bourgeois circles. It is openly said that without the intervention of the gendarmes the strike would probably have suffered a significant decline today, but that it has in fact remained steady and that if the current methods persist it will continue for several more days at this level."

Like the bourgeois press and important sections of bourgeois public opinion the Government sometimes showed sympathy with the striking miners and impatience with the intransigence of the employers. In 1889 and 1905 the Government tried to mediate between the two sides. In 1889 the Kaiser met a delegation of strike leaders, and the Government tried to persuade the employers to make concessions in the so-called "Berlin Protocol". This was eventually rejected by the

1. STU, Oberpräsidium: 2828 Ed.2, Bochumer Zeitung 11.5.1889.
employers, and the final stages of the strike were marked by more repressive behaviour by the Government authorities: strike meetings were banned and the central strike committee was arrested. Nevertheless, the strike was followed by a (much criticized) official enquiry, and eventually by a reform of the mining law. The Novella of 1892 obliged each mine to produce a proper set of work rules, and specified some of its contents: the length of the working day, the wages system, the disciplinary system and the method of resolving disputes had all to be laid down. Certain limits were placed on what was allowed: a worker could not be dismissed without notice if the management had known the ground for dismissal for over a week; money from fines and deductions had to be used for the workers' benefit; and the employers were forbidden to mark a worker's papers with open or secret comments on his behaviour. The views of the miners on the draft work rules of their pit were to be considered by Government mine officials with the aim of achieving agreement. A law of 1890 also introduced arbitration courts (Berggewerbegericht) for the mining industry to settle disputes. These reforms by no means gave the miners what they had demanded in the strike of 1889; but the disappointment of the miners was fully matched by the outrage of the employers who saw them as a fundamental attack on their right to manage their property and to make agreements with workers as equals in a free market.


2. Within the Government the reforms were closely associated with von Berlepsch, Prussian Minister of Commerce and formerly Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf. ibid. chapter 6.
The 1905 strike was also marked by attempts by the Government to conciliate, and by the offer of purely Governmental concessions. In early February the strike leaders were able to claim that the strike was "a wonderful success" because of the promise of legislation. In July a reform of the mining law abolished the tollen system, limited the winding time which could be added to the basic eight-hour shift to half an hour, limited overtime shifts and created a system of workers' committees. Once again there was disappointment among many miners about the extent of the concessions, and their sometimes ambiguous character: the workers' committees, for instance, were circumscribed in what they could discuss and there were severe limits on the eligibility of miners to stand or vote for them. Nevertheless, they did represent important and tangible concessions which were strongly resented by the employers.

The Government thus showed itself willing to intervene in the industry to conciliate and restore industrial peace, and to back this up with various legislative concessions to the miners. In 1912 conciliation was attempted by the Government even before the strike started. In

1. StAB, h55, flyer of Siefener-Torjmission. Otto Hue described the concessions as more valuable than a 20 per cent wage increase: The Times 31.1.1905.

2. Koch, Berufserhebung p. 100.

3. Workers' committees already existed in other sectors of German industry, and had been suggested in the 1889 strike not by the strikers but by a left-liberal Reichstag deputy. Although at first boycotted by the largest miners' union, the committees in practice seem to have generally played a mediating role, reducing rather than increasing conflict and tension in the mining industry. Kirchhoff, Sozialpolitik chapter 9; E.G. Spencer "Employer Response to Unionism" pp. 397-412.
effect this policy marked a recognition of the inadequacy of complete reliance on the free workings of the market economy, and a limited return to the older tradition of close state involvement in the industry: it was not therefore a policy incompatible with a strongly conservative political orientation, as was illustrated by the occasional discussions of nationalisation. Nor did an underlying willingness to grant concessions - even in the face of opposition from the employers - mean that the state authorities were unwilling to intervene hard in a manner unlikely to win strikers' support or even understanding; on many occasions vigorous action was taken - sometimes action of doubtful legality such as the wholesale banning of meetings and indiscriminate arrests - to deter the strikers. Troops and gendarmes were brought in during several strikes, and there were occasional violent incidents: as we have seen, two innocent bystanders were killed and four wounded in Bochum when troops fired to disperse a crowd in 1889. Most violent incidents occurred, however, when the miners themselves were deeply divided over a strike, since it was on these occasions that the police and troops were given the unenviable task of protecting those who wished to work from the wrath of the strikers (and the strikers' families). For this reason the 1899 and 1912 strikes were particularly violent, with incidents occurring chiefly at shift changes. A Herne barber who lived opposite Shamrock described one incident in 1899:

"The gendarmes drove the people who were standing by the pit gates apart and laid about the passers-by who had done nothing and who had previously been kept away with the strikers. The great

majority of those hit were not armed with sticks etc. at all....

One man who came by a field path was very badly beaten by a
gendarme with a bare sabre. The man was unarmed. He did not
fight back. He just kept his hands over his head so that this
would not get hit too. A second gendarme came over and they both
worked him over together. People were terribly beaten by the
gendarmes, particularly by the long fence which runs from the
Shamrock pit to Herne". 1

Nevertheless, despite incidents such as these and the general harrassment
of strikers in which state officials sometimes indulged, the Government's
normal reaction when faced with a serious stoppage - or even the prospect
of a serious strike - was to look for grounds for compromise; and if the
strike demonstrated that it could last the Government was ultimately
willing to force concessions to the miners, if necessary against the will
of the employers. Miners could thus hope for at least limited
concessions from the state.

The ultimate willingness of the Government to compromise contrasted
sharply with the approach generally adopted by the employers. In strike
after strike the employers refused to enter serious negotiations,
insisting that the work contract was a private affair between the
individual worker and his employer which could not be interfered with
through collective means. In 1889 even the concessions offered, largely
at the Kaiser's prompting, by Dr. Hammacher, the chairman of the employer's
federation were later withdrawn. Thomas Sattelnacher, a director of the
Louise Tiefbau company expressed the employers' overriding concern when he
commented: "We must remain the masters of our works; we should have

1. StAB, b51, Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung 25.11.1899.
remained the masters of nothing if we had accepted the protocol of Dr. Harnacker.\(^1\)

It is hard to point to any real concessions being made by the employers to strikers. In 1889 they reluctantly accepted that some concessions might be necessary, after the personal intervention of the Kaiser, but as we have seen the original proposals were subsequently watered down: in particular the idea of workers' committees, even with merely the limited function of discussing overtime arrangements, was dropped.\(^2\) In 1905 the employers refused all negotiations and made no concessions: the strike was called off on promised reforms from the Government alone.\(^3\) The Bochum Chamber of Commerce noted that the miners had suffered "a defeat on the economic front" but in contrast had secured "an undoubted success in the field of state legal action, the chief significance of which is political".\(^4\) In 1912 there were no negotiations between strikers and employers and no concessions. There does not appear to have been any instance, even in the smaller strikes which have been studied, of concessions being offered by employers to strikers in an attempt to persuade them to resume their work.

In many cases, indeed, the very opposite was the case: miners were warned that if they did not resume work promptly they would lose their

1. BA 18/65, Sattelnacher to Neumann 5.6.1889.
4. STAB, Tagistsbericht 1905 p.16.
job and, in the case of those who lived in company housing, their home. The use of company housing in undermining strike solidarity was clearly expressed in the correspondence between Louis Baare, chairman of the Bochumer Verein, and Heiderich, the manager of one of the company's pits, during the 1889 strike. On 9 May, shortly after the start of the strike, Baare wrote expressing his hope that they would soon get some men back to work: "We can particularly expect this from the people living in the Eppendorf colony". 1 The next day he wrote again, saying that some ex-miners now working in the company's metal works would be sent out to re-open the pit: "perhaps our miners living in the Eppendorf colony will join them". 2 The next day Heiderich assembled the men from the colony and promised military protection and immediate pay increases for those willing to go back. By 16 May 66 of the 82 family heads living in the colony were back at work, and Heiderich was planning to visit those who were still out. 3 The other miners at the pit did not return to work in full until 20 May, and it is clear that the pressure put on the colony dwellers had played an important part in splitting the strikers and achieving a partial return to work before the rest were prepared to end the strike. The same sort of pressure appears to have been exerted at other pits: at Iansfeld the strike lasted until 21 May, but the bulk of the colony dwellers had returned by 17 May. 4 The North Bochum Amtmann noted the relative restraint of the older miners, "particularly those with a family of their own or a nine house". 5

1. WA, 328 cc Nr.1, Baare to Heiderich 9.5.1889.
2. ibid. 10.5.1889.
3. ibid. Heiderich to Baare 11,12,16.5.1889.
5. StAB, Ah1, Ant Bochum Nord to ILB 21.5.1889.
In some cases the employers did not need to issue overt threats to impress on miners the possible consequences of striking. On other occasions, however, they were very explicit. In 1891 the Vollmond management issued a notice naming the date by which they expected everyone to be back at work; those who failed to do so would be deemed to have broken their contract and no longer to work for the company; those who lived in company housing would have to evacuate it. To back this up a mine official went down to the colony to explain in person what would happen. During the 1905 strike 13 miners from Louise Tiefbau were sent a similar notice:

"Since you have voluntarily stayed away from work for three consecutive shifts we are using the power given us in paragraph 3 of the work rules and dismiss you from our employment. Your name is deleted from the work list. Since you are no longer employed by us, in accordance with paragraph 2 of the lease agreement we dissolve the lease agreement of...and instruct you to evacuate the dwelling....within 3 days from the 16th inclusive, if you have not by then made another work contract with us in accordance with the work rules".  

The strike leaders felt it necessary to issue a proclamation assuring the strikers that "the communal, county, provincial and state officials will not allow you to be deposited on the street" - an explicit recognition that the employers' hard line was subject to the moderating influence of the state. In 1912 there were similar threats: at Teutoburgia, near Castrop, the pit manager told the (non-striking) workers' committee that strikers from the colony would have to leave

2. BA, 18/71, 12.1.1905. During the same strike the manager at Friedlicher Nachbar was reported to be hoping "to get the mine's colony dwellers back to work". STAI, Oberbergamt Dortmund 18h3, Bergrevier Hattingen to Oberbergamt 10.2.1905.
3. STAt, Oberbergamt Dortmund 18h3, Siebener Kommission strike notice 29.1.1909.
their homes after the strike was over: "The workers' committee said that they could only regard that as proper and correct".  

The employers' threats did contain an element of bluff: it was in the nature of things that they could not dispense with large parts of their labour force, particularly since they frequently suffered from a shortage of labour. But this did not prevent them from implementing their threats on a selective basis. Virtually every strike was followed by the sacking of "agitators" - which generally meant anyone who had played a prominent part in the stoppage. The 1889 strike was followed by a general sacking of strike delegates. At Karl Friedrich in Weitmar the two delegates, Bauer and Walter, were sacked in July. Walter had worked at the pit for thirty years and had an exemplary work record. He was a Catholic and not a social democrat and had been elected delegate because he had the general respect of his comrades. Bauer was a more active politician and had made himself unpopular with the management by his vigorous presentation of the miners' complaints to the commission of inquiry which followed the strike. Nevertheless, he had taken a generally moderate position: before the strike he had spoken against a stoppage and had been in danger of being beaten up as a result; at the commission of inquiry he had argued that reforms such as the introduction of workers' committees would lead to better social relations in the pits and to less rather than more strikes, and had called not for higher wages all round but for the reform of anomalies in the wages system which enabled some to earn excessively while others were inadequately paid.  

1. STA\textsuperscript{i}, Oberbergamt Dortmund 1859, Gewerkschaft Teutoburgia to Bergrevier Dortmund III, 14.3.1912.  
2. STA\textsuperscript{i}, Oberpräsidium 2828a, Frankfurter Zeitung 23.7.1889, Westfälische Volkszeitung 8.7.1889; StAB, mCO, Amt Bochum II to KLB 6.6.1889.
One of the Hannover delegates recounted his experience:

"In spite of the fact that I had taken some holiday from the pit H. where I was employed, I was summoned at 11.30 p.m. in the night of 30 May by registered letter to start work early the next morning. I naturally did not start at the time indicated since I was not prepared and when one has not worked for some time there is a lot to do before everything is arranged, and in addition I thought the pit management would have the sense not seriously to summon a man to work with such short notice. But I was mistaken. When I arrived at the mine in the morning the Manager Kracht told me I should return at five in the afternoon and collect my papers... Later, when I tried to collect my wages, not only was I not paid for the two shifts I had worked in which I had earned 7 marks, but I was told that I owed them 8 marks. Long live Humanity! - Long live the Hannover management!" 1

The sackings were reinforced by a system of blacklisting, so that once dismissed a man found it extremely difficult or impossible to get another job elsewhere. Once again the employers' attitude was appreciably harder than that of the Government. In October the Arnsberg Regierungs-Präsidium issued a circular to local officials, noting:

"In agreement has been made between the mine managements of the Ruhr coal district that no miner who has been dismissed from a pit in this district or has resigned will be taken on at another mine. This rigorous measure can only be strongly regretted, since on the one hand it represents a quite unjustified restriction on the right of free movement of labour and on the other it plays a very important part in sharpening the social differences between employers and employees. In view of the discontent still prevailing amongst the miners it will be officials' task to draw serious attention to this agreement at every opportunity in the leading circles of the mining industry". 2

The blacklist of 1889 was an unusually thorough backup to the sackings which followed the strike of that year, but the dismissals themselves were far from exceptional. Strike after strike was followed by sackings

1. IZF, Westfälische Arbeiter-Zeitung 10.7.1889.
2. StAB, h62, 19.10.1889. In November the employers' organisation, the Verein für die Bergbaulichen Interessen itself warned its members to be more careful with their blacklisting, and in December, faced with Government pressure and the possibility of further strikes, the blacklist was ended. StAB, h62, Westfälische Volkszeitung 5.12.1889, ARA to AIB 9.12.1889; StAB, Lüricher Sprecher 9.12.1889; E. Aumann Die Bergarbeiterbewegung in rheinisch-westfälischen Industriebereich (unpublished Staatsarchiv, Bochum, 1973) p.38.
of activists. In 1891 the delegates at Siebenplaneten were sacked as soon as the men returned to work. The Hannover management dismissed 50 miners permanently and laid off a further 236 for a month. 70 of these men lived in company housing. Altogether some 288 miners were permanently sacked from nineteen pits in the Bochum area and a further 247 were temporarily laid off, although apart from the Hannover men only 8 were in company housing. Constantin gave the two tenants it sacked four weeks to get out of their homes. A number of strike leaders were also arrested, but usually had to be released for lack of evidence; others were eventually charged with "incitement", "threatening behaviour" and the like. The 1893 strike was marked by a particularly tough line by the employers: the Bergbauliche Verein urged its members to make full use of their power to sack and fine workers who broke their contracts and not to take on men who had been dismissed from other pits. At Hibernia 200 men were given notice and this led to a large increase in the number of men returning to work. The end of the strike was followed by sackings: Lothringen dismissed 20 men, mainly "the leaders and strike agitators amongst the work force". A further 24 were temporarily locked out, and 5 men were given a month to vacate their company housing. Hunsfeld sacked 30 men and locked out a further 7 for three weeks. Shamrock dismissed 3 men permanently and a further 8 for a week; the strike leaders, who had returned to work in the time allowed, were also given their notice.

1. IZF, Westfälische Freie Presse 30.4.1891.
2. StAB, hh7.
The 1905 strike was followed by some sporadic sackings and by delays in re-employing certain miners. According to the union paper dismissals were delayed at first because of the support which public opinion had given the strike, but by April, two months after the resumption of work, men were being given their notice at a number of pits. Local Government officials reported that certain men were not taken on again after the strike, and that often they had been particularly active or vociferous during the strike: three men from Lothringen, five from Shamrock, one each from Hannibal, Constantin and Hannover are mentioned, along with others in the South Bochum and Langendreer districts. Others were taken back but subsequently sacked for mistreating men who had stayed at work during the strike or for insulting mine officials. The sackings were not on a large scale: the economic boom and continuing demand for labour was enough to preclude that; but they did take place on a selective basis and emphasized the uncowed attitude of the employers. In 1912 strikers were again treated as contract breakers and only accepted back on the basis of a substantial fine (six shifts' pay).

Perhaps the one area in which it could be argued that the employers made concessions in the face of strike action was over wages. Strikes were indeed sometimes followed by wage rises, even if the increases did not match those demanded by the strikers. The 1889 official inquiry found

1. IZF, Bergarbeiter Zeitung 22.1.1905.
2. StAB, 155.
3. Gladen "Streiks" p.146. For an example of the difficulty of maintaining black lists when demand for labour was high, see Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus p.129.
at many pits increases of up to about twenty per cent. It is hard, however, to attribute more than perhaps the timing to the effect of the strike: wages were rising anyway and continued to rise well after the strike, and there is no doubt that they would have done so even without the strike. The same was true both of the relatively successful 1905 strike and the disastrous one in 1912. In the case of some of the hauliers' strikes their demand for wage increases were accepted: this happened at Constantin in 1896, and the 1899 Herne strike was also followed by wage increases for hauliers, at pits both affected and unaffected by the stoppage. Both of these strikes occurred at a time when wages were rising anyway and the strikes probably affected little but the timing. The 1907 hauliers' strike ended in defeat: at Hannover 25 strikers were sacked and others were fined for breaking their contracts. Some mines did raise wages but others did not, and while shift wages in the Ruhr continued to rise during the rest of the year they did so no faster than before and still somewhat more slowly than did hewers' earnings.

Thus even the pay increases which sometimes followed strikes cannot generally be counted as strike gains. Of far greater importance was the general economic situation, with rising demand for coal enabling the employers to pay more for labour and the general labour shortage at such times requiring them to do so. The primacy of purely economic

1. StAB, h42, Ergebnisse der Untersuchung.

2. Quarterly wages figures printed in Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.118-150.

3. StAB, h63, Ant Pochum I to KLB 25.4.1896; StAB, h50.

h. StAB, h64, Ant Kordel to KLB 11,15.5.1907; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.119.
factors in setting the level of wages was clearly shown when the booms ended and earnings fell again - irrespective of the impact of any earlier strikes.

Conclusions

We saw earlier that the experience of work in the pits gave rise to protest and attempts to find improvements. Frequently this protest was expressed in individualist forms, most notably through absenteeism and individual job-changing. Strikes, in contrast, were essentially collective actions, requiring the participation and solidarity of large numbers of miners if they were to be effective. They thus provide a particularly useful analytical tool for an assessment of the degree to which the experience of work in the pits, which was common to most mine-workers in the Ruhr, could transcend the social and other divisions which so deeply characterized the working class in the area.

Strikes, like other forms of protest, arose directly and spontaneously out of the daily concerns of the miner at his work. Certain central issues - the hours of work, pay and the miners' dignity at work - formed the focal issues in strike after strike. Efforts to control strikes, to prevent them occurring or to direct them against the wishes of the men concerned, generally failed. Strikes were a persistent and characteristic response of miners to their experience of work, particularly during boom periods.

Yet despite their importance, mining strikes generally failed to win more than partial support. Only three of the numerous mining strikes
in the area were supported by over half of the mine-workers, and only in 1905 was mass solidarity sustained for more than a very short period. Most strikes remained limited to the pits of a given locality or to a particular category of mine-worker. It was largely because of this failure to achieve overwhelming and sustained solidarity that the strikes almost always ended in failure: the mine-owners were never forced to make significant concessions and usually responded by sacking and fining strikers after the stoppage was over. Those gains which were made were essentially political concessions, made by the state.
In the previous chapters we have seen something of the main characteristics of working class society in the rapidly industrializing Ruhr of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We have seen the growth of the population and the physical setting in which the new working class lived. We have discussed the work they did in the pits and the impact which it had on their social relations. And we have observed some of the main expressions of discontent and protest, particularly absenteeism, job-changing and strikes. Such protest was mostly spontaneous and achieved little: individualist methods such as job-changing might secure some advantage for individuals only; and strikes, as we have seen, rarely achieved sufficient strength to win any concessions and never enough to defeat the employers. In this chapter we will turn to attempts to overcome these weaknesses through the creation of organised forms of collective action - the development of the labour movement, in both its trade union and political aspects.

Post writing on the history of the labour movement in Germany in this period has been predominantly concerned with the history of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Relatively little attention has been given to the history of trade unions, particularly the Christian ones.\(^1\) The overriding concern with the political (and sometimes the purely

---

\(^1\) There are, of course, exceptions to this generalisation: see for example, H. Grobing Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (Lüchow, 1966); Ritter Arbeiterbewegung; Ritter and Tenfelde "Durchbruch der freien Gewerkschaften"; but see also the contents of M. Bartiny "Die politische Bedeutung der gewerkschaftlichen Arbeiter-Sekretariate vor dem ersten Weltkrieg" in Vetter (ed) Von Sozialistengesetz zur litbestimmung pp.153-174.
ideological) history of the SPD reflects the general tendency to view
the history of the labour movement without detailed reference to the
social, and particularly the work, experience of working people.
The result has been that political and ideological developments have
been seen in a vacuum, in isolation from the history of the people in
whose name the protagonists claimed to speak and act and on whose
support they ultimately depended.

We shall not recount in this chapter the full history of the trade
unions and the political labour movement in Bochum and the Ruhr. ¹
Rather it will be our concern to highlight some of the ways in which
the social and industrial history of the workers in the area,
particularly the miners, shaped and influenced the organised labour
movement. We will look first at the miners' unions and then at the
SPD.

Miners' unions
The unflattering description of the trade unions as "recruiting schools
for the party" has tended to overshadow the early importance of the
trade union movement. Miners' unions were never the instrument of
political parties in a narrow sense, although there were important
links between them.

The main dynamic behind the foundation of the miners' unions was the

¹ Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung provides the most useful general history
of the miners' union movement. On the history of the SPD, see
Hützenkirchen Sozialdemokratische Verein. See also the essays in
Reulecke (ed) Arbeiter-Bewegung am Rhein und Ruhr.
realisation, in the aftermath of spontaneous strikes, of the need for a more permanent and organised form of collective solidarity. The very first, and short-lived, attempt to organise the Ruhr workers occurred in 1868, at the time of one of the first miners' strikes at Essen.¹ The much larger strike in 1872, which ended in failure, was followed by a further attempt to create a miners' union. From the beginning such attempts had to face the reality of a politically and denominationally divided working class, and the 1872 union tried to overcome this by carefully balancing the executive committee - two Catholics, two Lassallean socialists, and one Protestant. But this organisation also rapidly disappeared from the scene - in large part because wages were rising rapidly anyway.² The next attempt, the third in ten years, came in 1877, again in the wake of a number of strikes, though none of them on the scale of 1872. Once again the union attempted to overcome the sectional divisions within the working class, but the active hostility of the Catholic leaders and their refusal to work with social democrats fatally weakened it; in the following year this organisation followed its predecessors into oblivion.³

This pattern of strikes followed by attempts to organise was repeated in 1889. As we saw in the last chapter, the great strike of that year broke out spontaneously without co-ordination or direction. Leader-

2. ibid. pp.483-485;
3. ibid. pp.511-522; see chapter 3 above.
ship and co-operation of the strikers was swiftly improvised, but the strike's last days were marked by uncertainty and fluctuations in policy as the central strike committee lost control over the situation. The ending of the strike was swiftly followed by serious attempts to form a union in which the solidarity which had marked the early days of the strike could be reconstituted and given more lasting expression.

In August 1889 the Verband zur Wahrung und Förderung der Bergmännischen Interessen im Rheinland und Westfalen was formed. Reflecting the non-sectarian solidarity of the strike, its first statute affirmed: "Religion and politics are completely excluded in every respect". It was supported by social democrats (notably Ludwig Schröder) and Catholics (notably Johannes Pussangel) and local branches rapidly sprang up all over the Ruhr: by March 1890 there were 26 branches in the villages around Bochum with a membership of nearly 5,000.

The early miners' unions were thus set up in response to the need for organisation felt during strikes. The fact that most of the strikes ended in defeat increased the need for a body which might strengthen the miners in any future conflict or perhaps even make strike action unnecessary. It is perhaps significant that the first paragraph of the 1889 union's statute explained that its general aim of "furthering the spiritual, trade and material interest of the members" was to be achieved through scientific lectures, discussions, specialist instruction, the reading of specialist literature, the foundation of a union library

1. Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.129-139.
2. StAB, 461.
and through legal defence. No mention was made of industrial action. By creating an organisation in which all miners could unite, irrespective of their politics and religion, a more lasting and stronger solidarity might be achieved than that which might or might not be shown in strikes.

Nevertheless, the divisions within the miners soon reappeared, with both a sectarian and tactical dispute. The disastrous strike of April 1890 was supported by the union, and Pussangel blamed the "complete defeat" on the union leadership. In a newspaper article he welcomed the decision of most miners not to join the stoppage; the chief hope of success, in his view, lay not in strikes but rather in gaining the support of the middle classes and the Government, but it was precisely this which the leaders had lost through their rigid "demands". Pussangel and his mainly Catholic followers left the union and in May 1890 formed their own rival organisation. This split was in fact to mark the end of a united miners' union until after the Second World War.

Despite this split, however, the Alter Verband (as the first union was henceforth generally known) prospered. In September 1890 it was re-formed on a national basis as the Verband der deutschen Bergleute;

1. Koch Be_rgarbeiterbewegung p.49. One reason, no doubt, was the need to avoid reprisals from the state: trade unions had been generally suppressed in 1878, and although they had been allowed to reappear and grow during the 1880's, their position remained subject to political uncertainty: the anti-socialist law was only abolished in 1890. V.I. Ittke The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890 (Princeton, 1965); Fricke Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung, 1862-1890 pp.308-313.

2. StAB, h62, Westfälische Volkszeitung 12.1.1890; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.51.
the Saxon miners' paper, the Deutsche Bergarbeiterzeitung was adopted as the official union paper in the Ruhr too. Membership in the Ruhr rose from around 27,000 in the autumn of 1890 to around 36,000 in late 1891 and early 1892.1

Nevertheless, the initial success of the union was short-lived. In addition to the split with the "Christians" in 1890, the repeated failure of the strikes of the early 1890's undermined the credibility and effectiveness of the union at the local level. As we have seen, the strike failures were usually followed by the sacking of local delegates. Some, like Johannes Kohr, an important figure in the Herne and Werne districts, left the area entirely: Kohr went to the Saar; and August Siegel, one of the three delegates to the Kaiser in 1889, fled in 1892 to England to escape forthcoming court cases.2 Some sacked delegates - including Lohmann in Witten and Bauer in Weitmar - stayed in their neighbourhoods as traders or in some other job, but were inevitably now somewhat more distanced from the miners.

More serious than individual harrassment, however, was the changing economic situation. 1890 saw the beginning of a fall in industrial demand, a fall which began to be felt in the Ruhr in 1891. As always, the metal industry felt the changing economic situation first, and by July 1891 men were being laid off in the Witten engineering works.3

1. StAB, b61. The membership figures are not free from ambiguity and should be treated with reserve.

2. StAB, hh6, KLB directive 2.1.1893; Siegel Kein Lebenskampf p.122.

3. StAB, b63, Witten police to KLB 21.7.1891.
Demand for coal began to fall off in August 1891, and by November and December many pits were beginning to cut back on shifts and to lay off men. In the first four months of 1892 it was estimated that nearly four thousand miners were laid off from Ruhr pits, and that a further five thousand left voluntarily and were not replaced. At the same time wages began to fall, from an average of 3.57 marks per shift in the third quarter of 1891 to only 3.23 marks a year later. Demand for coal remained weak (a factor which led to the founding of the coal syndicate in February 1893) and the price was not stabilized until the end of 1893. By that time average wages had fallen to 3.15 marks, having been even lower earlier in the year.

The end of the boom marked, as we observed in the previous chapter, the end of the period of intense and semi-continuous industrial unrest in the pits. It also marked the end of the growth of the union. Between March and June 1892 the reported membership of the Alter Verband in the Ruhr fell from about 37,000 to under 26,000; the rival "Christian" union also experienced a disastrous loss of membership and finance and had to be dissolved in the summer of 1892. The disastrous official strike of January 1893 accelerated the trend: membership was reported to be down to around 15,000 by the end of March 1893, and continued sharply downwards until there were fewer than four thousand in 1896.

1. StAB, Registrats Bericht 1891/92 pp.14, 16; Glückauf 20.4.1892.
3. StAB, h61; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.55.
4. StAB, h61; in fact many members remained on the books long after they had ceased active membership or to pay subscriptions: the collapse was almost certainly complete by 1893 and 1894; StAB, h61, Oberbürgermeister Bochum to RFA, 4.7.1897.
By the beginning of 1891 the Langendreer branch - with a former membership of over 500 - had ceased to hold meetings; at Werne the local branch had closed down, and the few remaining union members who paid subscriptions did so to the newspaper distributor; the Barendorf branch still met, but it was always the same small group of eight to ten members; the Weitmar branch had ceased to hold meetings. In 1891 the union co-operative - which had had over thirty stores, nearly 3,000 members and a substantial profit in the previous year - went bankrupt, leaving a loss of 16,000 marks capital. In Weitmar some people were reported to be preserving their union membership merely in the hope of having a claim on the assets when it was eventually dissolved.

The re-founding in the autumn of the "Christian" miners' union - now named the Gewerksverein christlicher Bergarbeiter - posed a new threat. Otto Hue described the position vividly:

"At the beginning of 1895 the Alter Verband was on the verge of death, a wreck, abandoned by the majority of those who had greeted the proud ship at its launching. It is a fact that even the least despondent leaders reckoned with a gradual dissolution. Opponents joyfully proclaimed that the hated Alter Verband was as good as gone."

In February several of the union's leaders, including Ludwig Schröder, were arrested and sentenced to prison for up to five years for perjury.

1. StAB, 461, Amt Langendreer to KLB, 30.1.1894; Amt Werne to KLB, 21.1.1894; Amt Weitmar to KLB, 29.1.1894.

2. Hue attributed the collapse in part to the policy of relying on miners rather than businessmen to run the co-operative, and in part to the hostility of the nine owners and their threats to the miners who used them; Hue Neutrale oder parteiische Gewerkschaften? p.75; STAK, Oberpräsidium 269, Bd.1, RPA to Minister des Innern, 8.5.1893; STAI, RA 192, Oberbürgermeister Bochum to RPA, 31.8.1893.

3. StAB, 461, Amt Weitmar to KLB 29.1.1894.


5. In 1911 it was finally established that they had been wrongly convicted. For a recent account of the case, see A. Hall Scandal, Sensation and Social Democracy (Cambridge, 1977) pp.78-83.
This in fact proved to be the union's low point, and it was able
to recover and grow over the following years. One important factor
behind the recovery was the improved economic position in the later
1890's. A further one was the appearance of new leadership. The
main figure was Otto Hue, a former metal worker and the new editor of
the union paper. He was the most forceful and articulate miners' leader in this entire period, and although his views about the proper role and aspirations of the union did not differ in essentials from those of other leaders, he expressed them with considerably greater facility. It is therefore worth looking briefly at his position and his views.

Hue was only 21 when he took over the editorship of the union paper in
1894. He never held any official post in the union except for his editorship, and a consequent seat on the executive. Nevertheless, his was to be the decisive voice in the union from the late 1890's onwards. In part this was due to his intellectual strength, which few other leaders could match.¹ In part it was because of his energy: in addition to editing the paper, he was a constant speaker at meetings, both in the Ruhr and elsewhere. It was also in part due to the fact that the union chairman - Heinrich Möller from 1895 and Hermann Sachse from 1902 - did not live in the Ruhr. Nevertheless, it was essentially his personal qualities which eventually led to the general recognition of Otto Hue as one of the foremost union leaders in Germany. The Arnsberg

¹. In addition to his other work he found time to publish a substantial work of history and theory in 1900, Neutrale oder parteiische Gewerkschaften? Just over ten years later he published a massive two-volume history of the German miners, Die Bergarbeiter.
Regierungs-Präsident commented: "Hue is with Legien one of the most
gifted union leaders and writers, both as an organiser and as an
agitator. Even his political opponents have repeatedly recognized
this".¹

Hue saw the essential function of a trade union as furthering the
specific occupational interests of a particular group of workers.² It
thus had fundamentally different aims from other organisations such as
political parties, which aimed at much broader changes. The two
activities need not necessarily conflict with one another; Hue was him­
selves an active SPD member: "I am far from being just a trade unionist
(ein Kurgewerkschaftler); I expect no more from the trade union than it
can give. Therefore I also involve myself actively in party political
propaganda".³ He felt, however, that the particular importance of the
trade unions was sometimes ignored and that many social democrats
exaggerated the gains which could be expected from the use of the vote
alone. The power of the ruling classes was based ultimately on their
economic power, and this would only be overcome when the workers created
their own countervailing economic power:

"The capitalists are today the masters of the state, because they
rule over the economic power. Would I therefore be so terribly
wrong if I maintained that if the Koloch is to be struck to its
heart this will only happen when the economic power of Capital is
opposed with that of the Proletariat - the trade union organisation".⁴

1. StAB, h80, RPA to Minister des Innern, 22.12.1905.
2. For his sustained discussion of the issues, see Hue Neutrale oder
3. ibid. p.142.
He rejected the argument that the trade unions could achieve nothing and that advance could only arise out of the progressive impoverishment of the workers.

Hue thus maintained the importance and independent validity of the trade unions. By joining the organisation en masse and expressing solidarity by following collective decisions the workers could create a weapon capable of confronting the employers and wrestling improvements in pay and working conditions from them. To achieve this, however, the essential unity of workers' interest had to be stressed. A trade union could not be strong until it encompassed all, or at least the great majority, of the workers in the particular occupation. The search for unity was thus the major problem faced by a trade union, particularly in a district with such deep divisions as the Ruhr. Hue stressed that the union must avoid any involvement with divisive questions such as religion and politics: the ruling classes naturally welcomed divisions amongst the workers, since this reduced the effectiveness of the latter's collective efforts to improve their position. Strict political and denominational neutrality was the only basis on which effective organisational solidarity could be built.

Hue also stressed that hard-won organisational advance should not be jeopardized by premature and ill-judged industrial conflict. The years from 1889 to 1893 had shown the weakness of spontaneous and unco-ordinated strikes. The attempt to create a strong organisation was essentially an attempt to find a more secure and substantial weapon with which to confront the employers. But its potential benefits would not be realised until the
great majority of miners were members, and until this was achieved partial strikes, ending in almost certain defeat, would only result in the weakening of the organisation. All efforts should be devoted to building up the organisation, and in the meantime strikes should be avoided. Thus in 1897 a miners' meeting addressed by Hue and Kälder decided not to strike since, "the only effect would be to harm the organisation which is in the process of expansion". ¹ In 1903 when strike talk was again in the air, Hue told a mass meeting in Essen:

"I am in principle no opponent of strikes. The strike is a weapon without which an organisation cannot be successful. Even the German Printers' Union, which has the best reputation, could do no other than turn to the strike and, if it was necessary, set to with a strong hand if agreement could not be reached through peaceful means....But how is it today with our organisation? Consider that of the 60,000 union members around 10-12,000 live in the Ruhr; but there are 250,000 miners living here, of whom over 180,000 work underground. Of these some 60,000 belong to the union, or less than 25 per cent! From this the question arises, are these 25 per cent in a position to ignore the 75 per cent who are unorganised? That is impossible. The union leaders are therefore not at present in a position to speak of strikes. We have the duty of warning against ill-considered steps". ²

The lesson that Hue and the union leaders had learned from the failures of the 1890's was that in the absence of an all-embracing and effective organisation, strikes were virtually bound to result in divisions and defeat.³

The advent of a new generation of leaders coincided with an improved economic situation and with it better conditions for union activity.

1. StAB, h63, Polizei Bochum to KJB, 28.3.1897.


3. The importance of the strike defeats of the early 1890's in strengthening the emphasis on organisation and union discipline has been noted by Ritter and Tenfelde "Durchbruch der Freien Gewerkschaften" pp.88ff.
Membership of the Alter Verband recovered and started to grow rapidly, particularly between 1900 and 1905, when it rose from 13,000 to nearly 79,000. The 1905 strike led to a considerable influx of members, despite the union's original opposition to the stoppage. But in the next few years the union failed to grow, and after 1910 started to actually decline. If we compare union membership with the total number of miners in the Ruhr, it becomes apparent that 1905 marked a membership peak which was never repeated, and that although the Alter Verband managed to keep over a fifth of Ruhr mineworkers in its ranks for some years thereafter, from 1912 (the year of its major strike failure) even this level was not maintained:
Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Alter Verband members</th>
<th>Mineworkers in Ruhr</th>
<th>Alter Verband members as per cent of all mineworkers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>5,158</td>
<td>152,650</td>
<td>3.0 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>4,153</td>
<td>154,702</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>3,938</td>
<td>161,870</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>12,118</td>
<td>176,102</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>17,971</td>
<td>191,847</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>18,506</td>
<td>205,106</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>12,945</td>
<td>226,902</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>23,012</td>
<td>243,926</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>32,632</td>
<td>243,963</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>46,132</td>
<td>255,992</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>56,153</td>
<td>270,259</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>78,862</td>
<td>267,798</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>78,879</td>
<td>278,719</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>77,713</td>
<td>303,089</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>80,143</td>
<td>334,733</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>76,869</td>
<td>340,567</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>78,188 (80,378)</td>
<td>345,136</td>
<td>22.7 (23.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>75,025</td>
<td>352,555</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>69,688</td>
<td>393,879</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>62,487</td>
<td>391,569</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The union thus suffered a double failure. In the first place it never managed, or even came near, to uniting the majority of miners behind it. And secondly, what success it had achieved by 1905 was gradually lost.

1. Fritsch Revisionismus p.111; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.139; Klessmann "Klassensolidarität" p.151. Fritsch and Klessmann give different figures for the Alter Verband's membership in 1910. The total figures conceal local variations: in the south Bochum area it was estimated that in 1907 over 60 per cent of the miners belonged to the union: StAB, h61, Ant Bochum II to KLB 28.8.1907; Crew Industry and Community p.271.
If the near collapse of the mid 1890s was overcome, the broader hopes of the new leaders remained far from realization.

There were many reasons why the Alter Verband did not achieve more success. One important factor was the continued rivalry between miners of different denominational, political and national outlooks. Despite the exhortations of Hue and others that the Alter Verband should be strictly non-political, those who suspected it of social democratic tendencies could point to a considerable amount of evidence apparently confirming their fears. Many of the union's leaders, both at the top and in the localities, were avowed social democrats. Hue himself stood as an SPD Reichstag candidate, and represented Bochum from 1903 until 1912. During the 1903 election the union's executive published an article in which they explained that while they did not in their union capacity support any one party, both they and union members were bound to consider the parties' attitudes on certain issues which were crucial to the union, particularly the franchise, freedom of assembly and association, and the tariffs. Neither the conservative parties nor the Centre could measure up to what was required. Without mentioning the party by name, the clear inference was that unionists should vote for the SPD. On the eve of the poll the Bergarbeiterzeitung carried another article making essentially the same point: only the SPD was campaigning on a programme which accorded with the workers' and union's interests.¹ A Gelsenkirchen police officer probably only

1. IZF, Deutsche Bergarbeiterzeitung 23.5.1903, 13.6.1903.
partially exaggerated when he commented afterwards:

"All the union's officers, all the Bergarbeiter's deliverers, all the union's local chairmen, secretaries and treasurers are [SPD] agitators...Never before has the social democratic character of the union and the social democratic tendencies of its main work been so clearly revealed as in this year's Reichstag election". 1

This election was not the only one in which the forces of the Alter Verband were clearly behind the SPD. In 1907 the Bergarbeiterzeitung denounced the colonial and taxation system: "Such a taxation system cries to heaven. This system is maintained with the support of all parties with the single exception of the social democrats!" 2 Prominent union leaders stood as SPD candidates in elections throughout this period: Peter Recktenwald, a union delegate from Hordel in 1890, was "known as a notorious agitator for the social democratic party"; the chairman of the Laer branch in the same year, a miner named Richter, declared in a public meeting that he was a social democrat. 3 Ludwig Schröder stood as SPD Reichstag candidate in Essen in 1893 and 1898. Johann Leyer, another founder member and the union's first Treasurer, stood in Recklinghausen in the same years. 4 Heinrich Käller, the union's chairman in the later 1890's, and his successor Hermann Sachse were both SPD Reichstag deputies, although not for Ruhr constituencies. Friedrich Kusemann, an important figure in the Bochum area (he was the chief union negotiator with the Bruchstrasse men prior to the 1905 strike) stood as SPD candidate for Bochum for the Prussian Landtag in 1908, and for the Reichstag seat of Harm-Soest in 1912. 5 Franz Pokorny,

1. STA: RA 1 96, Polizei Gelsenkirchen to RPA, 17.8.1903.
2. IZF, Deutsche Bergarbeiterzeitung 5.1.1907; ibid. 12.1.1907.
3. StAB, h62, Ant Bochum I to ILB 22.9.1890; Polizei Iser to ILB 10.2.1895.
4. IZF, Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiterzeitung 5.6.1893, 23.5.1898.
the leading Alter Verband figure in Gelsenkirchen, was SPD candidate in Recklinghausen in 1912.\footnote{IZF, Arbeiterzeitung 5.1.1912.} The degree of overlap between union and party made claims of political neutrality hard to justify before a sometimes sceptical public.

The profound suspicion of social democracy which was characteristic of large numbers of miners in the Ruhr, frequently fostered, as we saw in an earlier chapter, by religious organisations, thus rubbed off onto the Alter Verband, despite all protestations of political neutrality. Social democrats were commonly held to be hostile to religion, to property and even to the family, and for many devout working class men there could be no question of joining an organisation which was clearly identified with social democracy. That hostility to social democracy rather than indifference to trade unionism itself was the chief stumbling block for many was demonstrated by the growth of the rival "Christian" Gewerkverein. Founded in 1891, its membership in the Ruhr grew to nearly 32,000 in 1902 (when the Alter Verband had 33,000), to 33,000 in 1910 (when the Alter Verband stood at over 80,000), and to 100,000 in 1912 (when the Alter Verband had fallen to 70,000).\footnote{Hessemann "Klassen solidarity" p.151} Although never quite equalling the Alter Verband, it thus established a powerful and important place for itself. Although the Gewerkverein had close links with the Centre party, and sometimes adopted a somewhat more conciliatory approach than the Alter Verband (most notably in 1912, when

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{IZF, Arbeiterzeitung 5.1.1912.}
\item \footnote{Hessemann "Klassen solidarität" p.151}
\end{itemize}
the Gewerkverein refused to join the strike and instead called for police protection for strike breakers), it remained a genuinely independent and active trade union.\(^1\) It was opposed by the employers as vehemently as they resisted the Alter Verband. And although on some occasions it was conciliatory, on others the Gewerkverein adopted a militant posture.

Although the division between the Alter Verband and the Gewerkverein was the most fundamental split within the union movement, it was not the only one. There remained a small, liberal Hirsch-Duncker miners' union, with around 2,000 members.\(^2\) Although politically moderate - the Hirsch-Duncker unions were modelled on the allegedly non-political British trade unions - this union was industrially militant and joined in both the 1905 and 1912 strikes. But more important was the separate union of Polish miners (Zjednoczenie Zawodowe Polskie - ZZP: Bergarbeiterabteilung), founded in 1902. The rapid increase in the number of Poles in the Ruhr during the 1890's was accompanied by a growing awareness of national identity and a dissatisfaction with the German organisations in the area, including German trade unions. The Poles were strongly Catholic and increasingly nationalist. The Mars Polski, the chief Polish paper in the area, was founded in 1891 and adopted an uncompromising Catholic and nationalist stance. Not surprisingly, there was profound hostility to the German and apparently socialist-dominated Alter Verband.

1. A point somewhat played down by Hall Scandal, sensation and social democracy p.79.

Polish nationalism in the Ruhr was not, however, a force hostile to the aspirations of miners - Poles as well as Germans - who wanted to see improvements in such matters as wages, hours and conditions of work. Indeed, in industrial conflicts the Poles participated actively and - for instance in the 1899 Herne strike - with too much enthusiasm for the liking of many Germans. Although no figures exist for the number of Poles in the two main unions in the 1890's, there is no doubt that a significant number were members. The Alter Verband had to try particularly hard to recruit them, because of the religious barrier, and in 1897 launched a Polish-language newspaper. The Gewerkverein was more complacent, and did not launch an equivalent paper until 1903.  

Nevertheless, there was increasing irritation amongst Polish unionists with the essentially condescending attitude which they felt existed in the German unions. A police safety regulation at the beginning of 1899 banned anyone who could not understand orders in German from working underground, and anyone who was unable to read and speak German from promotion to supervisory functions. This was welcomed as a useful safety measure by the unions, but was bitterly resented as a piece of discrimination by the Poles. Relations between the communities were worsened by the events of the Herne strike in the summer of 1899. A sensitive point was the suspicion that many Germans - union members as well as others - regarded the Poles as an instrument for holding down wages. Union leaders such as Hue denied that this was so, but the suspicion enabled the 'Mars Polski to denounce the "socialist" Alter

1. For the history of the Polish miners' movement in the Ruhr see Klessmann "Klassensolidarität".
Verband and claim that socialists "are enemies of the Polish workers and would be happy if the Poles were prevented from working".¹ In 1902 the Poles formed their own rival union, the ZZP: the relatively slow growth of the Gewerkverein in subsequent years suggests that it was this organisation which lost particularly heavily to the rival Polish union. The ZZP grew rapidly: from under 5,000 in 1903 to nearly 18,000 in 1909 and a peak of over 30,000 in 1911 and 1912 (compared to the Gewerkverein's 10,000 members in 1912 and the Alter Verband's nearly 70,000).² The Poles had become a very powerful third force.

The hope of achieving a non-political and non-denominational trade union in which miners of all nationalities and opinions could unite thus failed to be realized: instead, a number of rival organisations appeared, each characterized by a particular political outlook. This development did not necessarily mean that united trade union action was impossible, if the various organisations could sink their differences and work together. This solution was inevitably difficult to achieve in view of the sharp antagonisms, but it was an aim which Hue and others pursued. On occasion - for example in the Knaapschaft elections of 1899 and 1900 - the Alter Verband and the Gewerkverein were able to agree on joint action. But August Brust, the first chairman of the Gewerkverein, was unwilling to maintain this policy, so that until the 1905 strike co-operation was the exception rather than the

1. ibid. p.160.
2. ibid. p.154.
In 1905, however, all four unions joined together to form a joint committee - the "Commission of Seven" - to direct the strike which had broken out in the first place against their wishes. The strike and its aftermath saw a considerable growth in union membership, and a return to inter-union rivalry. Nevertheless, the Commission continued in existence for some years subsequently. The replacement of Brust as chairman of the Gewerkverein in 1904 made co-operation somewhat easier. However, the proposal from the Alter Verband in 1910 that the four unions pursue a joint wage claim - an initiative which eventually led to the 1912 strike - was rejected by the Gewerkverein: the eventual strike was supported by the "Dreibund" of Alter Verband, ZEP and Hirsch-Duncker but was bitterly opposed by the Gewerkverein. Although the strike failure was followed by some calls for the creation of a single united miners' union, the bitterness of the strike effectively removed any possibility of serious co-operation in the remaining two years before the outbreak of war.

The divisions between the various miners' organisations were only one aspect of the failure of trade unions to unite the miners: in some ways even more serious was the fact that the majority of miners in the Ruhr remained outside any union at all. Even in 1910, when the highest degree of unionisation was achieved, around 60 per cent of Ruhr nine-workers remained unorganised. Even amongst underground workers, not many more than half wore union members. 1 After this peak the proportion

1. ibid. p.151; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.122, 139; Rue Bergarbeiter p.720. A number of historians have seriously exaggerated the degree of unionization of Ruhr miners by applying national union membership figures to the Ruhr: see Kirchhoff Sozialpolitik p.166; N. Höllmann "Die Geschichte der Bergarbeiter k" in W. Först (ed) Ruhrgebiet und Neues Land (Köln, 1968) p.92; Glad "Streiks" p.141; Spencer "Employer Response to Unionism" p.399.
of miners who were union members actually fell.

There were a number of factors behind this failure of the unions to win more than a minority of the miners. One obvious difficulty was simply the speed of the expansion of the industry and the rapidity with which newcomers arrived in the area. Many came from a rural and conservative background and found any notion of trade unionism - even unionism such as that practiced by the Gewerkverein and the ZZP with its strong religious and nationalist links - profoundly new and doubtful. Many doubted whether they would stay in the district for long anyway. Job-changing and geographical mobility within the Ruhr also made organisational work particularly difficult. In the Linden area, which covered 35 branches of the Alter Verband, the union had 5,750 members in 1908 and 5,960 two years later; but this apparent stability concealed a turnover of 1,900 members - or about a third - over the same period. The district organisers described some of the reasons:

"This turnover takes place mainly at Stinnes' mines. The reason lies clearly in the fact that at these pits there is no payment for the secondary jobs: repair and maintenance work is included in the piece rates. When therefore a gang sees that a seam is bad and that they can earn nothing from it they naturally look for other work. The turnover is worst in the housing colony of the Friedlicher Nachbar pit. Our local officials can run a house-to-house agitation each month and they will gain from five to twenty new members each time; but when they return a fortnight later to collect the subscriptions, they only find half the new members; the others are already away". 2

The Gewerkverein faced the same difficulties:

"Our successes were undermined through the frequent loss of members as a result of the high turnover of jobs and homes. Transferring members very often fail to register properly, so that there is a break in the delivery of the union's paper and in the collection of contributions. In this way we lose many members". 3

2. IGBE, A1 20, Verband der Bergarbeiter Deutschland, Jahresbericht 1909/10 p.162.
Hue described the "colossal membership turnover" as "the greatest evil in trade union life", and considered that ex-members had a generally discouraging effect on potential new trade unionists. Until members could be bound more firmly to the organisation, particularly through incentives such as insurance provisions, too many were unreliable and effectively weakened the union.¹

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to the unions in their efforts to win members was the lack of real incentives which they could offer. Recognition of the unions was adamantly rejected by the employers until the collapse of 1918. As we saw in the last chapter, the employers generally dismissed "agitators" when the opportunity allowed, particularly in the aftermath of strikes. The efforts in the early 1890's of strike delegates at a number of pits to gain recognition as spokesmen for the miners were completely unsuccessful. At times the employers adopted more systematic methods to exclude activists from their mines: in 1889 there was for some months a lock-out of activists, and in 1908 a further curb on the hiring of men who had left their former mine in breach of contract or who had been dismissed for strike activity; these agreements were generally thought to be backed up by black-lists.² Following protests, the employers introduced instead a system of central employment exchanges at which applicants for employment had to provide satisfactory documentation about previous jobs.

¹ IZF, Deutsche Berg- und Hüttenarbeiter Zeitung 28.5.1898. The important impact of membership instability and its contribution to the stress on strong organisation and strong central leadership has recently been noted by Langeniesche "Wanderungsbewegungen" pp.38-40, and Miethamer and Brüggemeier "Wie wohnten Arbeiter im Kaiserreich" p.134.
² Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.118; STAI, Landratsamt Gelsenkirchen 190, Polizei Wattenscheid to T. Landrat Gelsenkirchen 13.7.1908.
The unions protested loudly against the implied limitation on the freedom to change jobs, but were powerless to prevent the introduction of the new system in 1910.¹

The final years before the war saw an important new initiative by Ruhr employers in their continued efforts to strengthen the loyalty of their employees to the company and to weaken the appeal of the trade unions: the fostering of so-called "yellow" unions. In 1906 a group of Protestant miners formed a "National Miners' Union", pledged to oppose social democracy, support the Kaiser and foster good relations between employers and workers. But the new organisation gained only 130 members and soon disappeared.² It was not until 1911 and 1912 that yellow unions began to be formed within the Ruhr mining industry. These unions were company organisations, generally founded on the initiative of the employer and given substantial financial support by the company. They were generally pledged to foster good industrial relations and to oppose other trade unions. They offered tangible benefits in the form of sickness and similar insurance, social events and the opportunity - which it was claimed that many miners greatly valued - to mix socially on occasion with the company's higher managers and employers.³ The movement was originated in the Ruhr by Krupp, and only spread on a significant scale to the mining industry in the aftermath of the 1912 strike. From 7 unions and 131 members in the mining

¹. STA!, Oberbergamt Dortmund 18h0.
². Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung pp.117-118.
industry in 1911, the movement grew to 93 unions and over 21,000
members (or around five per cent of Ruhr mine-workers) in early 1911.\footnote{Kattheier "Werkvereine" p.188. Kattheier estimates that over 9 per cent of Ruhr mine-workers were members of the yellow unions, but it is not clear where he has obtained his figures for the overall number of mine-workers. As throughout this study, I have adopted the figures for the Oberbergamtsbezirk Dortmund, printed in Koch Bergarbeiter-bewegung p.139. Saul suggests that in a number of Ruhr towns the number of yellow unionists exceeded the number of "free" trade unionists: it is not clear whether the Alter Verband (most of whose members lived outside the towns) is included in the figures for "free" unionists. Saul Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung p.147.}

The independent trade unions had to regard this considerable growth with concern. In some ways it was the Gewerkverein and the confessional workers' clubs which were most directly threatened, since their political outlook was nearer to that of the yellow unions and their members were more likely to be drawn away.\footnote{Kattheier "Werkvereine" p.189.} But the yellow unions formed a direct threat to the very principles of any independent trade unionism, and were bitterly opposed by all the existing unions. The last SPD Report for West Westphalia before the outbreak of war commented:

> "Although hitherto the successful recruiting ground of workers for the yellow unions was the foundries and the factories, we should not ignore the fact that the yellow movement is also constantly gaining ground amongst the miners. The yellow movement is above all a serious danger to the further development of the trade union and political movement in the industrial area of the Rhineland and Westphalia where such great masses of uninvolved people /"Indifferente/ are brought together. The employers encourage this movement with every conceivable means, in order to make use of it as a defence force in economic and political struggles".\footnote{IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 10,11.7.1914.}

Ironically, one effect of the growth of the yellow unions was to provide the independent unions with an important issue on which they could unite. But this was not to become an important factor until the later years of the war.

---

1. Kattheier "Werkvereine" p.188. Kattheier estimates that over 9 per cent of Ruhr mine-workers were members of the yellow unions, but it is not clear where he has obtained his figures for the overall number of mine-workers. As throughout this study, I have adopted the figures for the Oberbergamtsbezirk Dortmund, printed in Koch Bergarbeiter-bewegung p.139. Saul suggests that in a number of Ruhr towns the number of yellow unionists exceeded the number of "free" trade unionists: it is not clear whether the Alter Verband (most of whose members lived outside the towns) is included in the figures for "free" unionists. Saul Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung p.147.


3. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 10,11.7.1914.
The consistent hostility of the employers to the independent trade unions and their own lack of industrial strength prevented them from exercising effective power in the mines. The complete freedom with which the employers determined the essential issues of wages and the hours of work was recognised by the Alter Verband in a leaflet issued to members in and around Bochum in 1914:

"On matters of pay the owners play fast and loose with the miners. They pinch and press down wages as they will. If the economic situation is good they let wages rise, but by so little and so slowly that the increase is barely noticeable. But when difficulties, contraction of demand and similar problems arrive - then what was given in spoonfuls is quickly taken away again with shovels.

Nor is it much different with the hours of work! What happened to the eight-hour shift in the last two years? If all the over-time shifts were taken into account, many men would be seen to have been working 12 to 15 hour shifts."¹

This situation in the mining industry was contrasted with that in the building, wood, transport and other industries and "in innumerable factories" where the employers had made agreements with unions on these matters.² After almost 25 years of activity the mining unions still exercised no effective power on these central issues.³

Despite their failure to achieve a system of collective bargaining, union members were increasingly able to secure positions as the miners' spokesmen through the various bodies to which miners' representatives were elected. This traditionally meant the Einmannschafft and, from 1890,

1. STA, RA I 11476, Verband der Bergarbeiter Deutschlands, Bezirkskommission an die Mitglieder im Bezirk Bochum, 1914.
2. ibid.
3. Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus p.251; Heinrich Imbusch claimed that the unions had exercised an influence over wages, but nonetheless recognized their fundamental weakness: Imbusch Arbeitsverhältnis p.100.
the Berggewerbegericht; following the 1905 strike, elected workers' committees were established at the mines; and following the Radbod disaster in 1908 elected safety officers were introduced. Union candidates were generally very successful in these elections: in 1910 299 Knappschaft mandates were won by Alter Verband candidates, 83 by the Gewerkverein, 27 by the ZZP, 3 by the Hirsch-Dürcker union and only 1 by non-unionists. In elections for the Gewerbegericht in 1906 the union candidates won almost 27,000 votes, compared with 300 for employers' candidates. In elections in 1912 to the workers' committees only 89 from 569 seats failed to go to the three leading unions. In elections for safety officers in 1910 the Alter Verband's candidates won 806 from 935 posts; only 17 posts were won by non-unionists. In 1912, following the defeat of the strike of that year and the growth of yellow unions, the Alter Verband won over half of the 1,003 posts: yellow unionists won 33 posts, and non-unionists 96. These election victories gave the unions a certain legitimacy as spokesmen for the miners. But the effect was limited: the posts gave their holders little power; and they illustrated the unions' dependence on Government legislation, rather than industrial strength, for a platform.

1. For the role of the Knappschaft, see chapter 1 above; for the Berggewerbegericht, Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.590; chapter 5 above.
3. STAI, RA I 98, Polizei Comissar Bochum to RFA, 12.11.1906.
4. STAI, Oberbergamt Dortmund 1852, "Zusammenfassung der...Neuwahlen von Sicherheitsmännern und Ausschussmitgliedern, August 1912".
5. ibid; Koch Bergarbeiterbewegung p.128; Rue Bergarbeiter II p.650.
The failure of the unions to gain recognition or to secure a bargaining position for themselves in the mine meant that there was relatively little incentive for potential members to join, or to maintain their membership when difficulties arose. The most tangible benefit of membership was the social security support which the unions provided. The main benefits were payable in case of sickness, unemployment or strike and a death grant. The amounts varied according to the length of union membership, and benefits were generally payable only after an initial period of membership. The importance of these benefits was shown during and after the 1905 strike when all the unions experienced a considerable increase in membership, motivated in many cases by a recognition of the advantage of membership in such circumstances, since it offered at least the prospect of some strike pay. In addition to these pecuniary advantages, the unions provided members with their newspapers and provided legal assistance in certain circumstances.\(^1\) Such benefits had, of course, to be paid for out of subscriptions and were not enough in themselves to attract more than a minority of the miners into membership.

The history of the miners' unions, and particularly of the Alter Verband, was thus the story of the abortive attempt to create through a strong and disciplined organisation a unity and solidarity the lack of which had so weakened the wild-cat strikes which were a feature of industrial relations in Ruhr mines. It was particularly the experience of the

\(^1\) IGBE, A1 146, "Bergarbeiter! Aufgewacht und erkenne eure Nacht!" 1911; Hue Bergarbeiter II pp.612-613; Pieper Lage der Bergarbeiter p.190.
repeated strike failures of the early 1890's which convinced many miners that unity and discipline were necessary if they were ever to successfully confront the employers. The union did indeed recover and grow, but the hopes of establishing lasting and effective solidarity through a united and disciplined organisation were not fulfilled. Political, religious and national divisions continued to be reflected in trade union divisions. Even more serious was the continued unwillingness of a majority of mineworkers to join any union. The unions were unable to win a place for themselves in the bargaining system at the mines, except for their relatively powerless position on the workers' committees. Nor were they able to bring the traditional spontaneous mining strikes under effective control and replace them with disciplined strikes with the sustained support of all the miners: in 1905 and on other occasions spontaneous strikes continued to erupt, against the advice of the union leaders. Then in 1912 the Alter Verband tried to hold a planned and disciplined strike the divisions between the unions and amongst the miners led to disaster, a disaster from which the unions did not recover until late in the war.

Would the Alter Verband have had more success with a different and less cautious policy? There was certainly a somewhat mechanistic and rigid element in the emphasis on the need to secure organisational solidarity before industrial action could be attempted. Both the 1889 strike (which although spontaneous achieved wide support and was followed by the creation of the union) and that of 1905 (which was also spontaneous, achieved even greater support and was followed by a considerable expansion of union membership) showed that the relationship between strike
activity and organisational growth was or could be more dynamic, with the very experience of industrial struggle itself producing a stronger and more united organisation. Nevertheless, we should not forget that even the 1889 and 1905 strikes were not victories for the miners: the only concessions came from the Government's intervention and not from the employers. And 1889 and 1905 were far from typical of miners' strikes: the repeated strikes of the early 1890's resulted in repeated defeats which achieved nothing, led to the sacking of activists and played an important part in the almost complete collapse of the newly founded union. Historically, the union had evolved as an attempt to transcend the fragile or non-existent solidarity of mining strikes and to find a more secure basis for effective solidarity. If Hue and other union leaders hoped for too much from the simple fact of organisation, critics who wanted a more militant policy overlooked the extreme danger that this policy involved of defeats and perhaps even collapse of the entire movement, as occurred in the mid-1890's and threatened to recur after the abortive 1912 strike.

The Social Democratic Party

The trade unions were one very important aspect of the organised labour movement; the other was the purely political organisation, in particular the SPD which tried to appeal on the basis of class, to workers qua workers, and to build the class conflict endemic in industrial life into a coherent and powerful political force.

Despite the optimistic current of Friedrich Engels that the miners belonged "potentially and necessarily" to social democracy, the SPD faced
an uphill battle in the Ruhr.\(^1\) We have already noted the uncompromising hostility to "atheistic" social democracy expressed by both the Catholic and Protestant Churches and their powerful working class organisations. Politically, the Protestant Church and most of the employers in the eastern Ruhr supported the National Liberal party, and political Catholicism was expressed through the Centre party. Reichstag elections in the Bochum Reichsthagswahlkreis were dominated throughout the 1870s and 1880s by the Centre and various liberal parties (the National Liberal party itself only appeared on the scene in the 1884 election). The Liberal candidate won in every election in these years except 1881, when von Schorlemer-Alst won the seat for the Centre.\(^2\) The SPD in contrast, was very weak. SPD candidates stood in Bochum in 1874, 1877 and 1878, but won only 1.5 per cent, 5.1 per cent and 2.2 per cent of the poll.\(^3\) 1878 saw anti-socialist legislation and strong measures against socialist sympathisers. At the Government's prompting the Bochum Chamber of Commerce circularized the firms of the district:

"The undersigned Chamber of Commerce has noted with great satisfaction that the management of the great industrial concerns of the Gelsenkirchen district and some individual employers in and around Bochum have determined to act strongly against the excesses of Social Democracy; and that they have resolved to threaten with dismissal those workers who continue to support it through subscription to socialist journals, attendance at socialist meetings and clubs and through financial contributions. As the representatives of the general interest of trade and industry in the Bochum district, we regard it as our duty to give explicit support to these measures against Social Democracy, and to urge all employers in our area to follow suit promptly".\(^4\)

The imposition of the anti-socialist laws effectively prevented any significant social democratic movement from raising its head. The only

2. Pettenmann "Witten in den Reichstagswahlen" p.163.
3. ibid.
4. MAR 1076, HEB to employers 16.6.1878; Handelsministerium Berlin to HEB 13.6.1878.
public platform open was through Reichstag elections, and in Bochum: there was no SPD candidate in either 1881 or 1884. In 1887 an SPD candidate stood, but won only 2.1 per cent of the vote.¹

Just as the 1889 strike led to the birth of the trade union movement, so it gave a great boost to the SPD. Many social democrats had played an active part in the strike and had won credibility as spokesmen for the miners' interests. In the Reichstag elections of February 1890 (when the anti-socialist law was still in force) prominent miners' leaders including Schröder, Siegel and Meyer stood as SPD candidates. The National Liberals, in contrast, were identified as the employers' party: during the strike Berger, the relatively progressive National Liberal representative for Bochum in the Prussian Landtag, had declared: "...as far as I am concerned, I stand before your High Court today as counsel for the defendant, the mine owners".² The National Liberal candidate in Bochum, Hermann Müllensiefen, was a factory owner. In the vote the SPD for the first time won a significant proportion of the vote: nearly 15 per cent in Bochum. The run-off between Centre and National Liberals saw a narrow Centre Party victory.³

A by-election at the end of the same year, following the resignation of the Centre victor through ill-health, allowed the newly legalized SPD to consolidate its advance. August Bebel came to speak, and 6,000 heard

¹ Nettmann Hütten in den Reichstagswahlen p.163.
² ibid. p.107.
³ ibid. p.163.
him denounce the German Reich as a class state because it laid all the burdens on the poor; he denounced food taxes, and described the National Liberal party as "the party par excellence of capitalism, of the money bag". The SPD share of the vote rose to 20 per cent, but this time the National Liberals were able to defeat the Centre in the run-off.

The next Reichstag election took place in 1893, at a time of economic depression and in the aftermath of the failed strike of that year. Gustav Lehnann, the Bochum SPD candidate in this election as in former ones, was not himself a miner and concentrated in his speeches on national issues such as the tariffs and the need for social legislation to protect the workers. But the social democrat paper reminded the voters of the events of the previous January:

"It was the National Liberals who drove you to strike, who scornfully rejected your just demands, or did not even answer them at all since they regard themselves as too superior to mix with the plebs, or the 'mob' as they call you. It was National Liberals who summoned gendarmes and the military, even though you had only made use of a legally guaranteed right; it was National Liberals who demanded that the ring leaders be thrown in jail without any legal process, in disregard of the law; National Liberals threw thousands of fathers onto the street, giving them a lesson in hunger! Did this happen to criminals? No, they were honest, honourable working men who turned to the final, desperate but fully legal weapon in order to secure a larger slice of bread and to help their brothers in the Saar. And National Liberals threw them onto the street, unconcerned with their plight because these workers dared to question the idol of National Liberalism, the money bag! Workers! Give this insolence the answer it deserves tomorrow".

2. Nettmann Witten in den Reichstagswahlen p.163.
3. IZF, Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiter Zeitung 31.5.1893; 3.6.1893; 6.6.1893.
4. ibid. 12.6.1893.
The SPD vote rose substantially: from 20.2 per cent of the votes cast to 29.6 per cent. This was not quite sufficient to push the Centre Party into third place, and in the run-off the Centre defeated the National Liberals.¹

In less than four years the SPD had thus grown from a small minority party to a serious challenger, with almost a third of the vote in the first round and a real chance of reaching the run-off. In large part this was a reflection of the perennial industrial conflict of those years and the party's ability to project itself as a spokesman of the workers. Already, however, the SPD had virtually reached its peak. In the remaining four elections before the outbreak of the war the party saw relatively little progress. In 1898, indeed, the SPD's share of the vote dropped to 26.7 per cent, despite concern that the Government planned to curtail the rights of assembly and association, and even to abolish universal suffrage for Reichstag elections.² In 1903 Otto Hue was adopted as the SPD candidate in Bochum: his popularity played an important part in the rise of the party's share of the vote to 35.5 per cent. The appearance of a separate Polish nationalist party in this election took votes from the Centre Party, who now fell into third place. In the run-off Hue for the SPD narrowly defeated the National Liberal candidate and for the first time Bochum sent a Social Democrat to the Reichstag.³

¹ Nettmann, Hütten in den Reichstagswahlen p.163.
² IZF, Deutscher Berg- und Hüttenarbeiter Zeitung 1.6.1898; Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiter Zeitung 11.6.1898.
³ Nettmann, Hütten in den Reichstagswahlen p.163.
In 1907 Hue's success was repeated, although his vote in the first round fell to 32.8 per cent. In 1912 the SPD's share of the first ballot rose to 36.9 per cent, but an electoral pact between the National Liberals and the Centre ensured that in the run-off Centre votes were put behind the National Liberal candidate, who therefore won comfortably. Despite the growth of SPD votes in the first round, the seat was thus lost.\(^1\)

Despite the fact that the SPD held the Reichstag seat for Bochum from 1903 to 1912, its underlying position had therefore advanced very little since 1893. The party continued to win only around a third of the first ballot - the best measure of its underlying appeal. The appearance of the Polish nationalists sufficiently weakened the Centre Party to ensure that the SPD would almost certainly get through to the run-off, but its fortunes at that stage depended on how Centre and Polish supporters then cast their votes.\(^2\) In 1903 and 1907 the Centre gave its supporters a free choice, while the Poles supported the SPD; but the essential fragility of the social democrat position was amply demonstrated in 1912 when the Centre threw its weight behind the National Liberals who therefore won the run-off. (The same happened in Duisburg).

The failure of the SPD to win more than around a third of the popular vote was not limited to Bochum. In the Regierungs-Bezirk Arnsberg, which included most of the eastern Ruhr (including Dortmund and Bochum),

\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) If the Centre and Polish voters had combined in the first ballot, they would have beaten the National Liberals into third place in 1903 and 1912, and the SPD in 1907. So at least two of these results would have been different.
the party won 22 per cent of the vote in 1898, 30 per cent in 1903 and 1907 and 31.5 per cent in 1912; in Regierungs-Bezirk Düsseldorf, which covered the western Ruhr, the proportion stood at 22 per cent in 1898, 32 per cent in 1903, 30 per cent in 1907 and 31.5 per cent in 1912.  

Party membership represented another index of the SPD's appeal to the workers. It is virtually impossible to calculate the party's membership before 1906, since it was only in that year that a firm organisation-  
al structure was established, covering an agreed geographical area (the Reichstagswahlkreis) and providing a clear criterion of what constituted party membership. The newly formed party organisation for the Bochum Reichstagswahlkreis in January 1906 had 1,500 members, but within months this had grown to 2,552. Membership continued to grow until 1910 when it stood at 6,763, but then fluctuated below this level, with a low of 5,820 in 1913. This was in a district where in 1912 162,995 people were eligible to vote - and that did not include women, who by this time were able to join the party. Even amongst SPD voters the proportion who were party members was particularly low: in 1907 party members represented 11.2 per cent of SPD voters in Bochum (in neighbouring Dortmund the figure was 15 per cent) compared with an average in the nation as a whole of 16.5 per cent. In 1912 party members represented 11.9 per cent of SPD voters in Bochum (19 per cent in Dortmund) compared with a national average of 22.8 per cent.  

1. K. Koszyk "Die sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung 1890 bis 1914" in Reulecke (ed) Arbeiterbewegung.  
2. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 19.11.1907, 3.10.1911, 17.7.1914.
The Ruhr was an overwhelmingly working-class society, and the SPD stood openly as the workers' party. As Gustav Lehmann, the party's Bochum candidate in most elections before 1903, declared at an election meeting in 1898: "Only the social democrats strive for an improvement in the position of the workers; it is therefore also the duty of every worker to give his vote to social democrat candidates." Yet very many workers failed to heed his call. On the eve of war the SPD leaders for the eastern Ruhr summed up their failure:

"It is deeply sad that our powerful industrial district, where one pit lies right by the next, where one foundry and one factory borders on the next, where the land is covered with thousands of chimneys and where a working class numbering hundreds of thousands slaves and wears itself down for miserly wages in these enormous work places, sends to Parliament men who are either the direct representatives of Capital, or are 'workers' representatives' like Giesbarts and Brust and not true representatives of the workers, social democrats. The mass of the people here are still very unenlightened and politically backward. They stand aside from the struggles for justice and freedom fought by the class-conscious proletariat".

The reasons for the social democrats' failure to win wider support are not hard to see. One problem which affected the party in common with other organisations was simply the high mobility of the area. Max König, the party's organiser for the eastern Ruhr, saw the "enormous fluctuation" in the district as one of the main problems for the party's recruiting efforts. Local branches suffered when the main personalities or officers left to work elsewhere. The high turnover of local leaders is illustrated by the regular reports of local government officials on

2. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 11.7.1914.
the party's "agitators" in their areas. Of 124 named "agitators" in Hietmar, Herne and Harpen who were active between the years 1896 and 1912, appreciably fewer than half were reported as playing an active role in the area for more than two years. Table 20 shows the number of activists and the number of years in which they were named as "agitators" in their area:

Table 20  "Socialist agitators" in Hietmar, Herne and Harpen 1896-1912.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of years in which reported active</th>
<th>No. of activists in:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hietmar</td>
<td>Herne</td>
<td>Harpen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were a number of reasons, of course, why a man who had once played a leading role in a locality might cease to do so. But whatever the reason, such a fluctuation of local leaders inevitably weakened the party (and for that matter, the trade unions). In Herne in 1899, for instance, four leading socialist agitators were mentioned: of the four, one lived in Bochum and the other three had only moved to Herne in the previous year. Indeed, one of these three, a Catholic joiner named Ludwig Kostrop, having moved from Essen to Herne in October 1898 then left for Recklinghausen in March 1899. The potential damage from the loss of a local leader was illustrated when Louis Jäger left Hietmar for

1. StAB, h79, h80, h83, h84.
2. StAB, h79, Ant Herne to KLB 20.3.1899.
Gelsenkirchen in 1909:

"One can see a standstill, if not even a step backwards, in the social democratic movement. Since the area organiser (Bezirksleiter) Louis Jäger left here some three months ago for Gelsenkirchen there have been no public political meetings at Schröder's inn. Jäger was the heart of the agitation and a fluent speaker. He knew how to attract the working masses to him and was a zealous propagandist for his party". 1

Two years later still no-one had stepped into Jäger's shoes in Weitmar:

"There are no good speakers who can attract the working masses; as a result the social democratic movement was not conspicuous."2

High turnover was not limited to the party's activists: it was also an important characteristic of the ordinary members. The scale of the turnover within the party is illustrated by comparing the number of new admissions with the total number of party members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New members</th>
<th>Total membership</th>
<th>Net increase over previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2,215</td>
<td>6,763</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>2,560</td>
<td>6,325</td>
<td>-438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>2,298</td>
<td>6,368</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>5,820</td>
<td>-548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>2,525</td>
<td>6,598</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The annual total of party members thus concealed a vast turnover. Each year around a third of the party's membership was replaced by new members.

1. STAB, h61, Art Weitmar to KL B 13.8.1909.
2. STAB, h82, Art Weitmar to KL B 11.8.1911.
3. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 1.7.1914.
It was a pattern common to Dortmund and Recklinghausen too, and König estimated in 1911 that there had, at least on paper, been a complete turnover of members in the eastern Ruhr, over the previous three years.  

Even after the repeal of the anti-socialist law in 1890, the SPD continued to face serious harassment, which further limited the party's ability to organise and agitate effectively. Party journalists were repeatedly fined and imprisoned for their "defamatory" and "libellous" articles. Petty regulations were enforced rigorously, on pain of fines: in 1902 two members of the Bochum party executive were fined for not registering the death of a member within three days. The Alter Verband suffered from similar petty harassment: in the same year the police prevented the union's Hattingen and Steele branches from allowing women in to their annual social event. One particular problem which seriously affected both the party and the union was the lack of suitable rooms for meetings. Meetings were generally held in inns, but landlords were pressured by police (who might impose a ban on drink sales while an SPD meeting was in progress), or by other customers, not to let their rooms to the social democrats; the union or party might respond with a boycott of the offending inn, and with efforts to cultivate or create "party" bars. During elections it was sometimes impossible for the

1. ibid.
2. For a general treatment of harassment of the SPD, see Hall Scandal, sensation and social democracy. See also Lucas Arbeitterradikalismus p.128
4. IZF, Volksblatt 3.7.1902.
5. IGEBE, AI 15, Alter Verband Jahresbericht 1902.
6. IZF, Deutsche Bergarbeiterzeitung 28.6.1902; IISG, Volksblatt 6.11.1907.
party to hold meetings in some localities. In 1911, when the party's biennial congress for the West Westphalia district was held in Bochum, the Fochum chairman had to apologise to the delegates and explain that there was no meeting room available to the party in the town.¹

The greatest obstacle to the SPD, however, was the strong link between politics and religion in the area, and the hostility which the party's alleged atheism aroused. We have already seen that the SPD showed some ambiguity in its attitude towards religion. In principle, religion was a private matter, to which the party was indifferent. In his 1890 Bochum speech August Bebel declared that although himself an atheist, he believed in religious freedom for all and had opposed the expulsion of the Jesuits from Germany; social democracy was, he claimed, more tolerant in this matter than the other parties.² In 1893 the party paper assured its readers that the party was not opposed to religion as such: everyone was free to believe what he wished.³ Nevertheless, social democratic hostility towards religion and the Churches was sometimes apparent. In 1890 it was reported that the party was attempting to weaken the Catholic Church's influence, particularly among the worker's wives, but that the latter were throwing the party's newspapers out of their homes!¹ Intermittent campaigns to persuade people to leave the Churches took place in Hörde in 1905-6, in Gelsenkirchen in

¹. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 30.10.1911.
². IZF, Westfälische Freie Presse 30.12.1890.
³. IZF, Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiter Zeitung 1h.6.1893.
¹. STAl, Oberpräsidium 269h Bd.1, RPA to Minister des Innern 2h.12.1890.
1907, and in Weitmar and Langendreer in 1910. In any case, mere religious toleration was insufficient to reassure those churchmen and religious activists who felt that political and social bodies should have a positive denominational commitment. The religious barrier was not simply an ideological question: as we have seen, religious loyalties and religious organisations formed the basis of the community and of the social life of many workers in the district. The SPD could and did rival the Churches and the nationalists with its own plethora of clubs (singing, cultural, sporting etc), its newspapers, its educational activities and its social life, but it remained only one among a number of competing and mutually exclusive "sub-cultures".

The SPD thus faced powerful and deeply entrenched opposition. Pastors and priests openly intervened in elections, and the resources of the denominational workers' organisations were thrown behind the Centre and National Liberal parties. Catholic voters were assured that "social democrats want to rob us of our religion so as to use us more surely for their ends". Hermann Franken, chairman of the Protestant Workers' Clubs, was National Liberal candidate in Bochum in 1898 and 1903, and based his appeal largely on his religious affiliations: "What has every Protestant and patriotic worker to do on 16 June?" asked the *Hittener Zeitung* in 1898, and answered that he should vote for Franken. The clubs themselves appealed: "Protestant voters! You must not allow an

1. See chapter 3 above.


unbelieving and unpatriotic social democrat, nor an anti-Protestant ultramontane, to win the victory....Every Protestant worker must be an agitator". 1 Finally, the vast majority of Polish workers showed themselves opposed to the SPD not only for its German domination, but for its (atheistic) socialist ideology: even the purely Polish social democratic party (PFS), which operated in the Ruhr from 1898 independently of the SPD, failed to gain more than a small number of supporters. 2

In addition to accusations of hostility towards religion, the SPD had to face claims that it was unpatriotic and that it wished to confiscate private property. Here again the party could claim that it had been misunderstood and that its opponents were using such questions to hide the real issue from the voters. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that such accusations played an important part in withholding working class support from the SPD. Even one of the party's stronger appeals - its continued opposition to the food taxes - may actually have cost it some support in a working class community with such strong and recent rural links as those enjoyed by many Ruhr workers. It is impossible to determine exactly how much support was alienated from the party through such issues; but they did mean that on important issues the SPD was largely on the defensive and was forced to try to explain its policies before a suspicious or hostile public.


2. Kehler "Polen in Ruhrgebiet" p.152; the PPS never won more than 300 members in the Ruhr.
The inability of the SPD to win the support of more than around a third of the electors in the Ruhr did not mean, however, that class was an unimportant element in political life there. It is not our purpose to trace the internal history of the Centre and National Liberal parties, but it is clear that they were increasingly faced with the necessity of recognising and even trying to meet the aspirations of miners and other workers in order to maintain their electoral appeal. There was, as we have seen, a strong tradition of social concern within the Catholic Church and the Centre party in the Ruhr: the identification of Protestantism with the employers of the region facilitated the Centre's ability to speak convincingly for workers here (although elsewhere in Germany, including the mining districts of Silesia, Catholicism was also the religion of the employers). The party's hierarchy was not always enthusiastic to espouse the essentially class-based interests of the miners: in the 1870's divisions within the party in Essen resulted in a workers' candidate standing against the official party candidate in the 1877 Reichstag election; the unofficial candidate won. In the 1881 Reichstag by-election in Bochum the aristocratic Centre party candidate, Freiherr von Schorlemmer-Alst, appealed directly to the class interest of the workers:

"Workers! Show at the election on 8 November that you wish to be treated in a Christian manner,...that when it is maintained that wages have generally risen by 15 per cent you also want to see something of this 15 per cent. At the large factories and mines you have experienced nothing of better wages; when you have earned something more you have had to work longer for it and sweat more, while those who now flatter you and try to win you for Dr. Löwe ["Progressive"] quietly pocket the biggest return". 2

1. See chapter 3 above.

Von Schorlemer-Alst von, and in the next year showed his sympathy with miners' concerns in a vigorous and widely reported attack in the Reichstag on the mine owners. He sharply criticized the pressure exerted on miners to work overtime, deductions from wages, fines and the wage statistics which, he maintained, failed to make proper allowance for overtime worked and for officials' salaries. The speech caused sharp controversy and was roundly criticized by the (National Liberal) employers' spokesmen, but strengthened the claim of the Centre party to be a true champion of the miners' interests.

Little more was heard from von Schorlemer in the following years, although Catholics and Centre supporters such as Lambert Lensing (editor of Tremonia in Dortmund) and Johannes Fussangcl were active in the miners' movement in the Ruhr. Conflict within the Centre party on class lines reappeared in the aftermath of the 1889 strike. The selection of a candidate in Bochum in February 1890, the first subsequent Reichstag election, proved to be difficult: Walter, a Gelsenkirchen party delegate, commented: "One must fear that if a miner is not nominated as candidate many miners will go with the social democrats on 20 February", and Bauer (a prominent figure during the strike in Weitmar and subsequently sacked from Karl Friedrich) criticized von Schorlemer's support for grain tariffs and commented: "A large estate owner can never qualify as a miners' representative". A meeting in Bochum, attended by 3,000 people, nominated a miner as candidate, but five days later, after


2. StAB, ländischer Sprecher h.2.1890.
von Schorlemer had avoided answering questions from party workers about his attitude to the miners' movement because of influenza, a meeting of party delegates readopted him as candidate for Bochum. Subsequently von Schorlemer explained, "I will always intercede for the workers with the aim of achieving good harmony between employers and employees, on the basis of legal regulation of workers' representation, of their rights and of workers' protection such as the arbitration courts and conciliation offices". This explanation encapsulated the common Centre party approach; the aim was to achieve fair treatment for workers and involved concessions from both sides; if necessary fairness should be imposed by Government intervention, and the party was proud of its support for legal measures designed to protect workers from the arbitrary acts of their employers. The new Centre candidate in December 1890, following von Schorlemer's resignation on grounds of ill-health, was the mayor of Gelsenkirchen, named Vattmann, who had already undergone a disciplinary procedure for providing von Schorlemer with confidential materials for the preparation of his 1882 speech, and had subsequently expressed public support for von Schorlemer's conclusions in his annual report. Despite this show of sympathy and support for the miners, however, the main thrust of Centre party policy was to stress the need for harmony between classes, not conflict. Vattmann maintained in 1882 that it was only at a minority of pits that conditions were bad. And in 1890 he was presented as a man who could speak not just for the miners but for all social groups:

1. ibid. 7.2.1890.
2. ibid. 12.2.1890.
"As mayor of Gelsenkirchen he knows the needs of every rank and every occupational group; he knows where the artisan's shoe pinches, the problems of the countryman, what is necessary for the protection of our homeland's industry; and he knows especially how things are for the working class and what is possible and necessary to improve their social situation. The Centre party's election committee could therefore not have found another man able to offer better guarantees that he will not represent a single class or a single calling in the Reichstag but rather will represent the community and every single individual". 1

The Centre party was thus pulled in two directions, between the party establishment who stressed the ultimate aim of harmony in social relations, and the radicals who wanted a less equivocal support for the miners. But either way the party included a direct appeal to Catholic miners: perhaps the pressure from the radicals forced the party establishment to go further than they might have wanted. In 1893 the original Bochum candidate was compelled to withdraw in the face of protests that he was a factory owner. And in 1903 the party finally put forward a miner as candidate for this overwhelmingly working class seat.

If both the SPD and the Centre party could plausibly claim to stand in the interests of working class people, was there a basis for co-operation between them against the National Liberals, "the party of the money bags"? Did class unity begin to overcome sectarian division in politics? An indication is provided by the run-offs of Reichstag elections, when the supporters of the party knocked out of the first round had to choose between the other two, or abstain. In both 1893 and 1898 SPD voters were forced to choose between the Centre

1. IZF, Tremonia Nr.28h, quoted in Westfalische Freie Presse 13.12.1890.
and the National Liberals. In 1893 the SPD denounced both candidates as "the representatives of two reactionary parties" and urged their members to abstain.¹ Very few listened to the advice: the run-off saw an increased total vote, with former SPD voters voting by two-thirds to one-third for the Centre. In 1898, however, despite support in the run-off for the Centre by Franz Pokorny, a leading social democrat and miners' leader in Gelsenkirchen, around two-thirds of SPD voters in the first round supported the National Liberals in the second: in part, perhaps, a reflection of the reduction in industrial conflict and the improved economic climate since the early 1890's; but also, no doubt, the result of the strong appeal to Protestant feeling which the National Liberals made on this occasion.

The 1903 election was the first in which the Centre, largely because of the appearance of a separate Polish candidate, failed to reach the run-off. In this and subsequent elections Centre supporters and Polish nationalists were compelled to choose between the SPD and the National Liberals. In 1903 the Poles came out in support of Hue, but the Centre advised its supporters not to vote for the SPD. The SPD was able to exploit the fact that Hermann Franken - the National Liberal candidate - was a strong Protestant to appeal to the Catholic voters: a poem on this theme by Fussangel was circulated as a campaign broadsheet by the SPD.² Nevertheless, in the vote almost a third of former Centre and Polish voters abstained, the same proportion voted SPD, while over forty

2. STAI, RA I 96, Extra-Abzug 25.6.1903.
per cent voted for the National Liberal candidate. The increase in
the SPD vote was enough, however, to give them their first victory in
Bochum. In the 1907 run-off the Poles again supported the SPD,
while the Centre gave their members a free choice. This time
approaching half of their first round voters supported the SPD, under
40 per cent voted for the National Liberals, and only 10 per cent
abstained. Once again, the SPD finished as winner with the help of
these votes.

The social democrats tried to develop this trend further in the run-off
of the Prussian Landtag election of 1908. This time, because of the
3-class voting system, the SPD was in third place and had to decide what
to do in the run-off. In Bochum the party gave its support to the
Centre, who accordingly won. The decision was criticized by some
within the SPD, particularly in Essen, who maintained that elsewhere the
Centre had failed to support SPD candidates and that the Centre rather
than the National Liberals now constituted the main opposition to the
SPD in the Ruhr. The Bochum party paper replied that the Centre had
done all they could for the social democrats, and that they were clearly
the lesser of two evils. The Bochum party secretary defended the
decision on the same grounds:

1. After the election the claimed: "In the run-off the predominantly
Catholic places in the northern half of the district gave us the
victory. The Catholic workers came over to social democracy en
masse". StAB, HSG, RPA to Minister des Innern, 8.12.1903.

2. HSG, Volksblatt 18, 20, 22.6.1908.
"No-one thinks that the Centre is more reliable than the National Liberals; the aim was rather to oust the capitalists' party from their dominant position in the Ruhr, and secondly to take from the Centre any weapon for agitation against us. We were fighting honourably for a better franchise, and could not therefore allow an outspoken opponent of the franchise to have the mandate". 1

There was thus in these years some sign of rapprochement between the SFD and the Centre and Polish Nationalist supporters. 2 The politicians were in part building on the solidarity shown in the 1905 strike and continued on an organisational level subsequently by the "Commission of Seven", in which all four miners' unions were represented. But, again like inter-union co-operation, these attempts at class unity collapsed in disarray in the final years before the war. This was largely a consequence of the tactical rightwards shift in the Centre's national position after 1909, and their alliance with the Conservatives. As a result they were bitterly attacked for supporting the tariffs which were held to be responsible for the rising food prices in 1911 and 1912. Hue published a leaflet in December 1911, attacking the Centre sharply for its new-found enthusiasm for tariffs. Only the rich industrialists and the better-off farmers benefitted from them, he argued, not the small peasants in whose name the Centre some-

1. STA!, RA I 100, Volk-blatt 25,26.8.1908. The position adopted by the SFD in Essen reflected the Centre's dominance there. It may have aroused at least some sympathy in Rochum too: in 1905 Hue had suggested that the National Liberals were already defeated and that the main opponent was the Centre. ILF, Arbeiter Zeitung 13,11,15.11.1905; see also STA!, h73, Westfälischer Volks-Kalender 1900.

2. In local elections in Rochum the Centre and National Liberals united against the SFD in 1907, but the alliance broke up in the following years. In 1912, however, fear of the SPD drove them together again. Crew Industry and Community p.119.
times claimed to speak, and certainly not the workers. The Bergarbeiter Zeitung also denounced "the clerical and conservative taxers".

The Centre this time fought bitterly against the SPD in the election run-off. The announcement of a pact between Centre and National Liberals, in which Centre candidates would be supported in Essen, Dortmund and, less formally, in Düsseldorf, while National Liberal candidates would receive joint support in Duisburg and Bochum, was enthusiastically welcomed at a Bochum meeting of 1,000 Centre activists.

Leading Centre figures appeared on National Liberal platforms: on one the Bochum Centre candidate, Professor Weskamp, denounced social democracy as "the common enemy" and described the SPD as a revolutionary party, opposed both to Fatherland and God. The Bergknappe, organ of the Gewerkverein, attacked Hue:

"Down with the social democracy....especially in the Bochum Wahlkreis! As is well known, Otto Hue is standing there in the run-off - the most spiteful and dishonourable opponent of our movement. His attacks on us are well known. For almost two decades he has fought, mistrusted and abused our movement. At first it was for him a 'still-born child'. Then he accused it of being an ultramontane foundation, an employers' gang, a company union. For years the union's members were abused in Hue's paper, the Bergarbeiter Zeitung, in the most malicious manner as company unionists. Even when the 1905 strike had palpably and clearly proved that such descriptions were unjustified and untrue, they did not cease. Hue deliberately cultivated the present dominant spirit within the social democratic union, the spirit of hatred against the Christians, and thus created extensive bitterness and upset the work for economic improvement of the miners' lot. What must now be done is to return to this enemy of our movement the malicious smears and his damage to the workers. That is the

1. O. Hue Die Verteuerung der Lebensmittel und ihre Ursachen (Bochum, 1911)
2. IGBE, Deutsche Bergarbeiter Zeitung 6.1.1912.
4. ibid. 22.1.1912.
honourable course for every Christian unionist. No-one must stay away from the poll! Everyone must be an agitator against our enemy!

Down with every social democrat!
But above all, down with Hue!  

Both the party establishment and the radical wing thus combined in a virulent campaign against the social democrats. The Poles were advised this time to abstain. Worse was to come on the eve of the poll, when rumours spread that the socialists had scrawled "Vote Hue" slogans and had left human excrement in the main Catholic church in Bochum, one much used by Poles. A subsequent SPD enquiry revealed that some excrement had in fact been left in the church, and that "Vote Otto Hue" had been written on a chair, but found no evidence that the party was responsible; it is certainly more probable that such actions were part of an attempt to discredit the social democrats.

In the vote, former Centre party and Polish Nationalist voters divided by three to one in favour of the National Liberals, with very few abstentions, by far the most clear-cut decision on one side that they had yet taken. The 1912 election thus marked the complete destruction of the former hopes of non-sectarian class unity between social democrats, Centre supporters and Polish Nationalists. Sectarianism and hostility to social democracy triumphed. And the stage had been set for the even more bitter destruction of working class unity in the miners' strike which broke out only two months later and which left a lasting

1. IGBE, quoted in Deutsche Bergarbeiter Zeitung 27.1.1912.
3. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 29.1.1912.
legacy of hatred and division between miners.¹

Part of the reason for the failure to achieve co-operation between the Centre and the social democrats on the basis of common support for workers' interests, was that they were not the only parties which enjoyed significant working class support. Almost all Poles in the area were working people, and the Polish Nationalists were thus a working class party, at least in the Ruhr. But even the National Liberals "the party of the factory Junkers, of the coal barons and iron kings, the main representative of large Capital and serving its interests", as the SPD described it in 1900² - relied heavily on working class support. Some of this support was due to pressure on employees: in 1882 the Centre party accused employers in Bochum of distributing National Liberal election propaganda and encouraging mine officials to ensure that workers under their supervision voted the right way; afterwards, men who were thought to have ignored the advice were sacked.³ In 1898 foremen from the Westfälische Stahlwerke were specifically invited to a National Liberal meeting, presumably so that they should encourage their workers to support the party; on polling day at least one pit manager was involved in the distribution of National Liberal propaganda, and Hermann Franken, the party's factory

1. The SPD attributed its poor showing in the 1913 Landtag elections in large part to legacy of the strike: "The great number of workers who through ignorance or malice did not join the 1912 strike, are no longer voters for us. They have been led to the Centre, through the Gewerksverbin, or to the National Liberals through the yellow unions". IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 10.7.1914.

2. StAB, h79, Westfälischer Volks-Kalender 1900.

owning candidate, was alleged to have sacked workers who expressed anti-National Liberal sentiments. At the 1908 Landtag election an overman at Friedrich der Grosse was reported to have repeatedly told the miners that they should vote for those who gave them their bread. The 1913 Landtag election was known in Hamborn as the "Schnapps-election": miners from Deutscher Kaiser were marched down to the polling booths by their foremen, where they were met by company directors who dispensed Schnapps and urged them to vote National Liberal.

Nevertheless, the National Liberals did not owe their continued ability to mobilize substantial numbers of working class votes solely to such crude pressures. They offered more positive attractions, appealing to workers' patriotism, Protestantism and sense of loyalty to employer and firm. The veterans' associations, which many workers were proud to join, were described by the Bochum Landrat as "a suitable means for the struggle against social democracy". The Lusorian immigrants, who like the Poles had their own clubs and their own distinctive sub-culture within the district, but who in contrast to the Poles identified themselves strongly with the German state and emperor, were a further important bastion of the party: a special party paper was published

2. HSG, Volksblatt 25.6.1908.
4. ZB, DA I 100, JAN to JAN 1,3,1907. On the development of these bodies in the Ruhr, see Tenfelde Sozialgeschichte p.351; Crews Industry and Community pp.135-137.
for them and local party officers cultivated their support. Perhaps most important were the Protestant workers' clubs, to which we have already referred. Through these various bodies, the National Liberals were able to appeal to many workers' basic loyalties and to their sense of community.

The National Liberals also showed themselves able to appeal, at least on occasion, to more direct workers' concerns. The most dramatic instance occurred in the Bochum by-election of December 1890. In the Reichstag election earlier in the year, the first after the 1889 strike, both the Centre and the SPD had gained at the expense of the National Liberals; in the December by-election Hermann Hällensiefen, National Liberal candidate and the owner of a glass factory, tried to retrieve the situation through an "elucidation" of his attitudes to the miners' grievances:

"I bring my full sympathy to all efforts to improve the workers' lot - this is self-evident.

I agree with the miners' desire that the 8-hour shift should include winding time, both in and out of the pit. I myself have for thirty years allowed our glass vessel makers to work only six hours, since they work in rooms which cannot be adequately ventilated...I agree with the miners' desire that higher wages should be paid for overtime, and that no one-sided pressure to work overtime should be exerted on the worker.

I agree with the miners' wish that those workers who were dismissed as a result of the miners' organisational efforts should be reinstated....Then I have an opportunity to put in a word on behalf of these miners' concerns I will do so.

1. Wehlau "Polen im Ruhrgebiet" p.560 (footnote 8). Enquiries in 1908 suggested that in the Bochum area the Lascarians had not been particularly prominent politically or in industrial actions, but that while some supported the SPD and the Alter Verband, "by far the greatest proportion of the Lascarians living here belong to the National Liberal party". StAB, b81, Ant Bochum II to JLB 19.2.1908, and reports from Jangendreer, Herne, Beitrar and Nordel.
I have already publicly indicated my support for conciliation offices and workers' committees.

Similarly, I have already spoken for the maintenance of the Innerschaft funds and agree that the administration should be as simple and cheap as possible and that the workers should have full equality in its administration. 1

This extraordinary statement - which certainly bore little relation to the policies and practices of the (mainly National Liberal) mine owners - seems to have been successful, and Müllensiefen won the election comfortably. However, he spoke only once in the Reichstag, and his "elucidation" had no impact on the miners' conditions of work.

The internal conflicts within the party reappeared in the 1893 election, when the leaders of the Protestant workers' clubs threatened to put up their own candidate - Anton Fischer, a former miner - in opposition to the official party candidate. They were only dissuaded with a promise that in future the clubs would be consulted before candidates were selected.2 Dr. Haarman, mayor of Witten and Reichstag deputy for Bochum from 1884 to 1890, was reselected. His campaign was based on appeals to patriotism: at stake was "the security of the country, both internally and externally"; the Bochumer Tageblatt accused the social democrats of being in receipt of French funds, and of wanting to hand back Alsace-Lorraine.3 This appeal was insufficient to defeat the Centre in the run-off.

Protestantism and patriotism continued as the main themes of most

1. StAB, Märkischer Sprecher 7.1.1891.
2. IZF, Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiter-Zeitung 16.5.1893.
national liberal campaigns. In 1912, however, they tried to boost their appeal to workers further by selecting a working miner, Karl Heckmann, who was also a member of his Protestant workers’ club. The SPD claimed that Heckmann had blacklegged in 1905, but this was vigorously denied. Heckmann claimed that the tariffs were the basis of German prosperity and that more armaments— not less, as the social democrats claimed—were necessary. With the support of the Centre, Heckmann was returned to the Reichstag.

Class regained therefore just one issue amongst others in Reichstag elections. All the parties appealed with considerable success to miners and working class people. The Centre and the national Liberals—though ironically not the SPD—even put up miners as candidates. Despite all attempts to overcome it, denominational loyalty remained a crucial political factor, and politics from 1893 onwards remained locked in a somewhat sterile 3-way division between social democrats, Centre and National Liberals (with the Polish Nationalists weakening the Centre from 1903 onwards).

It is against this background that the cautious and non-radical political stance adopted by the SPD in Dönhn, and more generally in the Ruhr, needs to be seen. It has already been pointed out that the reformist approach adopted by the SPD nationally for most of the prewar period— and beyond—owed more to the caution of ordinary union and party leaders and members than to the work of “revisionist” intellectuals
such as Eduard Bernstein. "Nowhere was this more true than in the
eastern Ruhr, where the only notable party intellectual, Konrad
Haenisch, was a radical and an isolated figure in the district.
Perhaps the most articulate spokesman for the Party's practice was
Otto Hue, but even he did not provide a systematic elucidation as he
had for his approach to trade unionism in Neutrale oder parteiische
Gewerkschaften?

Otto Hue attended the important SPD party congress in Dresden in 1903,
where the efforts of the revisionists were roundly condemned and voted
with the majority. The Bochum party conference in October of that
year passed a motion welcoming the fact that he had:

"Explicitly shown himself an opponent of efforts to divert our
party from our party programme and to change our tactics towards
the bourgeois groups....In the Ruhr too the most unsuitable
grounds exist for such revisionism. With the brutal and vulgar
resistance which the labour movement receives in the Ruhr, any
of our party comrades who could be a revisionist would not have
understood the ABC of class consciousness". 2

Nevertheless, despite this explicit rejection of "revisionism", Hue
and the local party adopted a moderate and even (in SPD terms) right-
wing stance on a range of issues. Earlier in 1903 Hue had tried to
persuade miners in Stockum not to strike, in part by appealing to their
loyalty to the state:

"We do not want a strike; we have the duty of calling to all
miners - we must not see ourselves simply as miners, but also as
citizens of the state (Staatsbürger). As such we should not
embark on anything which will bring harm to the state". 3

1. See e.g. G. Pülbeth "Zur Genese des Revisionismus in der deutschen
2. STAB, 189, RPA to Minister des Innern 8.12.1903.
3. STA!, RA I 96, Polizei Gelsenkirchen to RPA 17.8.1903.
In 1905 he stressed at a local party conference that the scope for radicalism was very limited in the Ruhr. The concentration of capital, and the power of the bosses, imposed severe constraints:

"There is no question of an individualist radicalism among us here in the Ruhr, because we are not the masters of the situation. The personal inclinations and the views of the individual play no role here, because we have to deal with facts which take precedence over the speculations of individuals".  

The power of the employers was such that militant action, particularly in the work setting, could not be lightly undertaken. He clashed bitterly with the radicals within the SPD over the 1905 strike. Konrad Haenisch, who edited the Dortmund party paper, argued in the Leipziger Volkszeitung in February 1905 that the strike had provided an opportunity to mobilise "the masses" in the Ruhr for the party, and in particular to smash the anti-socialist Catholic organisations; only lack of leadership had prevented this. This view was partially supported by Karl Kautsky in Neue Zeit, where he argued that the strike had been a defeat and that the unions should take a broader, more political view of their actions. He attacked such views strongly, maintaining that they betrayed an ignorance of the true conditions in the Ruhr.  

That year he ostentatiously declined to attend the Jena party congress, where he knew he would be strongly criticized, on the pretext that he had to campaign in a Reichstag election in Essen. Paul Wolf attended instead, and attempted to defend the Bergarbeiter Zeitung from its radical critics; but he was frequently interrupted by Rosa Luxemburg and Konrad Haenisch. The tone of the clash between

1. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 13, 14, 15.11.1905.
3. STAV, RA I 97, Polizei Kommissar Rochur to RFA 1.12.1905.
Hue's paper and the radicals is illustrated by an unsigned article in the Bergarbeiter Zeitung after the congress:

"Frau Rosa Luxemburg accused us at Jena of advising her to go to Russia to struggle with the workers against the knout-regime instead of writing 'revolutionary' articles from health resorts. The Bergarbeiter Zeitung did indeed write that, and correctly so. The Russian workers are bleeding, but great revolutionary theoreticians who play superficially with bloody revolution in their speeches and writings stay far from the fire. In Jena too Frau Rosa Luxemburg and those who think like her made speeches which dealt with blood and revolution. Sensible people tell themselves, 'Dogs which bark loudly, don't bite'...... 1

On other issues too, Hue took issue with the radicals. He defended, for instance, the south German social democrats for their votes in support of Land budgets, and argued in 1908 that a situation might arise when the SPD in the Reichstag might be faced with a budget in line with the party's tax policies: "Who among the people would understand it if we rejected this in the final vote?" 2 On militarism he commented at a regional party conference:

"If I was a delegate at an international congress, I would have voted against the anti-militarism notion. I fundamentally reject any concession to Hervé. To see the practical consequences of Hervé's agitation in France. The entire workers' movement there has only been hindered by this agitation. Militarism is an international phenomenon. It will not be swept from the world so quickly....One ought not to deceive oneself about the significance of national feeling". 3

On the colonial issue too Hue took a far from radical line, although he was careful to claim to be in line with Bebel:

1. IZF, Bergarbeiter Zeitung 7.10.1905; STAP, h80, HFA to Minister des Innern 22.12.1905. For the original article of which Luxemburg complained, see Nettl Rosa Luxemburg (paperback edition) p.206. Rosa Luxemburg did indeed return to Russia shortly afterwards.

2. STAP, RA I 106, Volksblatt 7.8.9.1908. Luckily for the SPD, when the issue did become a reality in 1909 it did not come to a vote. Schorske German Social Democracy pp.150-152.

"Basing myself not on Haarenbrecher or Hildebrand but rather on Bebel, I can say that we social democrats are not fundamentally opposed to a colonial policy. We regard it as thoroughly necessary that new export markets and new sources of raw materials must be opened up for industry, and that the backward areas must be associated with general civilization (Kultur). But we are strict opponents of a Peters-style colonial policy. We have fought that type of colonialism and we will continue to fight it. I know of not one of my colleagues in our Reichstag faction who would consider giving up our colonies, in which wealth worth many millions of marks has been created. As Bebel has explained, we will always support a colonial policy which spreads culture and civilization (Kultur). It is necessary to make this clear, because our opponents in the forthcoming Reichstag elections will once again maintain that we are fundamental opponents of all colonial efforts”. 1

Hue’s non-radical political stance embodied the political approach adopted by the SPD generally in the eastern Ruhr. The characteristic party tone was expressed by the Westfälsische Freie Presse in November 1890, just after the party’s legalization. The paper explained that the party had ”never” used the term "revolution" in a sense implying the use of force: the party’s principle was "revolutionary, aiming at fundamental changes in the state and society. And these changes should not be achieved through a ‘violent overthrow’, but rather through organic development. We know that one cannot change society overnight or through arbitrarily mounted acts of force”.2 The call by the radicals in 1905 for the political mass strike found almost no echo in the SPD in the area. The Dortmund SPD Reichstag deputy, Theodor Bönselburg (leader of the building workers’ union) vigorously denounced the idea at the Cologne trade union congress in May 1905. Haenisch felt so isolated that before the year was out he left Dortmund and went

1. ibid. 30.10.1911. Peters was a prominent and bloody colonial adventurer.

2. IZF, Westfälische Freie Presse 25.11.1890.
to work in the more sympathetic radical atmosphere of the Leinzigener Volkszeitung. The opposition which he had faced came not just from the unions but also from local party leaders.¹

Political radicalism appears to have been a very weak and localized force in the Ruhr during the pre-war years. Konrad Haenisch returned to Dortmund, and under his editorship the Arbeiter Zeitung became one of the more radical party papers in Germany. Yet the shallowness of this was demonstrated in 1910 when Georg Beyer, one of the editors, left the paper. Haenisch once again found himself without support: "At the moment I am completely isolated on the paper", he wrote, and three months later he again resigned. The paper immediately ceased to display its former radicalism, and in 1912 was even listed by the Bremer Bürgerzeitung as one of the party's revisionist papers.²

Haenisch claimed in a letter that he was always given full support when he addressed working miners in the area, and the defeat which he and the radicals suffered in Dortmund has been put down as primarily due to the machinations of conservative party and union functionaries.³ The radicals were unable to demonstrate, however, that they, and not the party leaders, had the real support of the mass of party members or - and more important - the mass of ordinary workers. The sporadic attempts by the radicals to organise opposition to the party and union

². Ibid. pp.76-77, 84.
³. Ibid. pp.76-84.
leaderships achieved little success. The Brackel branch of the SPD formed a radical stronghold for some years near Dortmund, but no other local branches - certainly none in or around Bochum - achieved a parallel reputation. In 1901 an anarchist poster was stuck up at the Siebenerplaneten pit; the Bochum party paper, the Volksblatt, considered it to be the work of an agent provocateur and warned its readers not to heed such calls: "What is necessary for us is knowledge, training and education through political and trade union organisation. The position of the workers can only be improved through strong and united behaviour, through organisation. Long live the organisation!"¹ Local Government officials considered that few workers had much interest in the more political and ideological aspects of the SPD's policies. The Hattingen Landrat commented in 1898:

"I remain strongly of the opinion that a large proportion of those who have cast social democratic votes are not really committed (zielbewussten) social democrats, and certainly not so far as the monarchy and religion are concerned. They want to improve their material situation and see in social democracy, which is not niggardly with promises, the party which will bring them nearer their goals. One could accurately describe such people as economic social democrats". ²

In circumstances such as this the radicals could on occasion capitalise on the occasional industrial militancy of many Ruhr miners; but attempts to translate industrial militancy into political radicalism faced very great problems.

This was clearly shown later in the 1900's, when a recognizable anarcho-socialist movement appeared in the Bochum district. Ferdinand Kampmann,

1. IZF, Volksblatt 22.5.1901.
2. STA/, RA I 9h, Landrat Hattingen to RPA 17.8.1898.
who lived in Brackel and was chairman there of an anarcho-socialist
miners' association which opposed the Alter Verband, worked from 1907
at Bruchstrasse, the Langendreer pit where the 1905 strike had
originated. He was regarded as one of the most hard-working and
conscientious men there. He fought a sustained campaign against the
Alter Verband, worked on Hay Day when some social democrats stayed away
from work, and distributed anarchist publications such as Einigkeit,
Freie Arbeiter, Soldatenbrevier and Generalstreik. His efforts had
little success: in 1909 bad relations with his colleagues forced him
to leave the pit, and when he failed to find work in Holland Bruchstrasse
refused to take him on again. 1 A year later a group of anarchists was
in existence in the area, with ten members reported to be meeting
monthly. The police searched the homes of eight of them and found a
considerable quantity of anarchist literature. 2 Local groups of the
anarcho-socialist "Free Liners' Association" were reported in Brackel,
Dortmund and Berghofen, and a "Free Association for All Trades" was
reported to exist in Gelsenkirchen. 3 A year later the movement had
disappeared from Werne, although a branch of the Free Liners' Association
with around twelve members was in existence in Langendreer. 4 Neverthe-
less, this branch too was short-lived: by 1913 it had closed down,
apparently under the combined influence of the 1912 strike defeat and the
high wages which were being paid in the district. 5

1. StAB, h81, Polizei Langendreer to ILB 30.6.1909, 5.8.1909, 26.8.1909,
2. StAB, h82, Ant Werne to ILB 26.8.1910.
4. StAB, h82, Ant Langendreer to ILB 6.8.1911; Ant Werne to ILB 16.8.1911.
5. StAB, Ant Langendreer to ILB 12.8.1913; ILB to RPA 29.8.1913. On the
weakness of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in the western as well as
the eastern Ruhr before 1914, see Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus pp.133-134,
162-164.
These isolated and short-lived campaigns, apparently never involving more than a handful of men, were the only reported attempts to create more radical organisations in the Bochum area, in opposition to the moderate policies of the Alter Verband and the SPD. Despite the continued occasional willingness of miners to ignore their leaders' advice when it came to industrial conflict, hardly any were interested in a more systematic and political radical opposition. The prime interest of the miners in the immediate issues of the workplace was illustrated by their continued greater interest in union than party matters. Party membership never matched union membership. The Arnsberg Regierungs-Präsidcnt commented in 1901: "The focus of the labour movement in the industrial district is without question the trade unions. The workers demonstrate greater interest in the economic daily questions than in the implementation of political theories. Social democracy knows well how to adapt to the given situation....Without doubt the party owes a large part of its success in elections to this work in the trade unions". 1 On all essentials the party and the union leadership were united. In large part this was the result of the very substantial overlap in both leadership and supporters between the two organisations. The opposition to Haenisch came not merely from the union leadership - although they were finally responsible for his removal from the Ruhr in 1911 - but from the party itself. 2

1. StuB, h80, R2A to Minister des Innern 15.11.1901.

The general agreement between union and party on the need for a cautious approach was clearly shown in their attitude to the May Day strike question. Not surprisingly Otto Hue adopted a cool attitude towards the international day of labour. In a personal article on the subject in 1904 he commented: "No-one - not me either! - is completely against May Day. But since it should be a powerful demonstration for workers' protection and peace between peoples, strong mass participation must be possible". To ensure this, he argued, May Day should be celebrated on the first Sunday in May, when all workers could participate without fear of reprisals; a call for mass strikes on 1 May was "impossible" to carry out.\(^1\) Hue's article and his attitude to May Day was criticized by the executive of the Alter Verband; but in the course of his reply to Hue, Heinrich Sachse, the union chairman, made it quite clear that he fully agreed on the impossibility of holding significant strikes:

"Certainly strike action on May Day has never been adopted by any union meeting, nor by any area or pit meeting. I too have never called for the general cessation of work on May at any miners' meeting, because we were hitherto always too weak in the face of powerful mining capital. But on the other hand I, and other comrades, have argued for 11 years that those comrades on the night shift should participate in large numbers in the day-time meetings on May, and that those who have day shifts should participate in the evening meetings and festivities. I have not heard that we miners and foundry workers have been severely criticized at party congresses etc., where May Day is discussed and resolutions passed because we do not stop work on May. Such criticism would have to be resolutely rejected. Because the mining capitalists have virtually always dismissed and disciplined comrades who stayed away on May.... One will certainly claim that the 'possibility' of striking does exist for the miners and foundry workers. I say, no, not yet! The miner and almost all foundry workers do not only have to accept being laid off and locked out, i.e. they do not just

---

lose their job; they mostly also lose their rights to the 'Kampfschaft' and to their works' pension schemes...." 1

The Bochum SPD branch supported Hue and submitted a resolution to the Bremen party congress calling for May Day to be celebrated on the first Sunday in the month. The division was not between party and union; and no-one seems to have regarded a mass strike on May Day as a serious possibility.

May Day was generally celebrated on a decentralized local basis, with social democrats in each village or group of villages holding their own meetings and other gatherings. The events of 1 May 1900 (a Tuesday) illustrate the character of this leading day in the socialist calendar. At 9.30 a.m. around 140 social democrats assembled at Förster's tavern in Bochum, where they unanimously passed a resolution:

"The May demonstration of the Bochum Wahlkreis, gathered today in Förster's tavern, declares that 1 May is still the proletariat's holiday and demands: expanded protection for workers (Arbeiterschutz), shortening of the working day to 8 hours, and participation by the workers in the general advances of culture and civilization (Kulturverwirklichungen); they protest against the capitalist mode of production; against the world power policy which threatens peace and the expansion of the fleet which results from it; against mass murder and war; and they know that they stand united in these sentiments with the workers of all countries." 3

After this the demonstrators went by train to the neighbouring village of Wanne. The police made them take off their red insignia. Others went to Wanne by bicycle. From Wanne they walked to Nickel-Röhlinghasen, and after a pause in a tavern they moved on to Gelsenkirchen,

2. STAL, RA I 96, Stadt Bochum to RPA 10.10.1900.
3. IZF, Volksblatt 5.5.1900.
distributing copies of the special May Day edition of the Volksblatt
as they went. At the Gelsenkirchen border they were met by four or
five police, who ordered the removal of all red insignia. One man's
red tulip was seized when he refused to comply, and when he asked for
the policeman's name he was arrested. In Gelsenkirchen the police
refused to permit a meeting to be held, and at least four demonstrators
were arrested. In the evening meetings were held at Lohrheide, Atten,
Bochum and Herne. At the Atten meeting Max König, a leading metal
worker unionist and social democrat in the district, denounced the
Gelsenkirchen police's harrassment of the demonstrators. The day
ended with music.¹

May Day was a far bigger event in years such as 1901 and 1910, when it
fell on a Sunday. In Herne there was no reported activity on May Day
at all in 1901 and 1902; and in 1903, although two meetings were held,
they do not appear to have been very large. But in 1904 around 600
gathered for a meeting in Herne.² In 1910 many more May Day tickets
(sold to participants as a way of raising funds) were sold in Bochum
than in previous years: in 1908 the figure was 8,731, in 1909 only
4,269, in 1910 8,972, and in 1911 it fell again to 7,393.³ In this
respect Bochum was less successful than neighbouring Dortmund: there,
although more May Day tickets were sold in 1910 than in previous years,
even more were sold in 1911.

¹ ibid. 3,5.1900.

² StAB, h79, Polizei Herne to KLB 2.5.1901; StAB, h80, Polizei Herne
to KLB 2.5.1902, 3,5.1901.; ibid. Bürgermeister Herne to KLB 2.5.1903.

³ IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 3,4,6,9,10.1911.
May Day strikes, in contrast, remained few and isolated. An SPD meeting in Langendreer in 1905 decided to ignore a central party call for protest meetings on Russia on 18 March, since that was a Saturday and the miners had to work: the meeting was held on Sunday 19 March instead. At the same meeting it was explained, apparently without demur, that although meetings would be held on 1 May, a Monday, the expeditions would be held on the Sunday since the miners' strike of 1905, "has shown us how sharply the pit managements punish absence from work".¹ The Bochum party debated the question again in 1907. Netzer, the editor of the Volksblatt had told the party congress in Essen that until he came to the Ruhr (he had previously worked on Vorwärts) he had been a keen supporter of work stoppages on May Day, but that his experience in the Ruhr had made him change his mind; the miners and the foundry workers would not support such strikes, and in the Bochum Wahlkreis, which had around 12,000 SPD voters, only around one thousand participated in the May Day events.² In a heated party meeting in Bochum, Sachse and Nerzig maintained that support for May Day activities was higher than this; but no-one claimed that significant work stoppages took place. Aufderstrasse commented: "The Dortmund and Essen delegates had exaggerated to an unbelievable extent. In this district the participation had remained pitiful. They should have had the courage to recognize the truth and simply end something which could not be carried through". And Franz Pokorny, the Gelsenkirchen miners' leader, suggested: "The demonstrations could be just as effective on a Sunday

1. StAB, h80, Ant Langendreer to KLB 6.3.1905.
2. StAB, h81, RPA to Minister des Innern 28.11.1907.
as today's work stoppage - which is no work stoppage". 1

The only report of a significant May Day strike in the Bochum district occurred in 1909, when 150 men were said to have stopped work at Bruchstrasse. 2 In the main, however, May Day was something of a family affair, enjoyed by those whose shift permitted attendance. 3 Apart from the political speeches and resolutions it was a chance to enjoy a walk through the early summer countryside. Women and children frequently joined in and there was usually singing, dancing and games. Many of the groups walking from village to village would only be distinguished from ordinary groups of walkers by their red insignia (where the police allowed them), their police escort and their socialist literature for distribution en route. Indeed, the SPD became concerned that the day was losing its political character entirely. The last years before the outbreak of war saw efforts to centralize the celebrations, to encourage a greater mass involvement. Nevertheless, the party's 1914 report for Westphalia (incorporating Bochum and Dortmund) noted:

"It can happily be said that in many localities the May Day arrangements offer the public much more than previously, and that those putting them on go to great trouble to improve them. The disadvantage is certainly that May Day is constantly losing more and more of its original character as a day of struggle". h

May Day was only one of the social events sponsored by the SPD. The Ruhr was noted for its plethora of social clubs, providing for all kinds

1. IEG, Volkshoff 3.10.1907.
2. StAD, 1.81, Polizei Langendreer to IEB 30.6.1909.
3. The Derrarbeiter Zeitung explicitly urged union members not to jeopardise their job by striking. IEGE, Derrarbeiter Zeitung 27.4.1912.
4. IEF, Arbeiter Zeitung 30.6.1911; StAD, 152, Polizei-Präsidt Bochum to RFA 30.5.1916.
of activity and sponsored by many different organisations. We have already noted the numerous and very popular clubs sponsored by the Churches in the district. The SPD also provided a wide range of social activities, including choirs, (of which there were 14 in the Bochum area alone in 1907), cycling clubs and athletics clubs - the latter appealing particularly to young people who until 1907 were unable by law to join political associations. How "political" these clubs were is hard to say, but the impression gained from the regular police reports is that their main function was recreational. There is no doubt that recreational and cultural activities were much needed and that the social democratic clubs helped to fill this need. Nevertheless, the social democrats were only one among a number of groups providing such resources to the workers, as the party's final pre-war report ruefully noted:

"It is impossible to hold entertainments or any kind of diversion for the working class in our area on work days. As a result everything happens on Sundays. The workers languish in forced labour and crave entertainment and recreation, and mostly expect to find them on Sundays in the diversions and entertainments of bourgeois, patriotic and sporting clubs, and in private social events - often of a very questionable nature. The consequence is that our social life and meetings suffer considerably". 1

Despite its cultural and recreational activities, the party's main activity was the fighting of Reichstag elections; between elections party life showed signs of decline. The only issue outside Reichstag elections which did produce a significant degree of political activity, and even signs of uncharacteristic militancy, was the agitation for reform of the 3-class Prussian Landtag franchise. The issue came to

1. IZF, Arbeiter Zeitung 29.6.1914.
the face in the Ruhr in the aftermath of the 1905 miners' strike, when
the original Government proposals for the reform of the mining law were
watered down by the Landtag. The miners' slogan became, "In the
Landtag we get stones instead of bread!". Otto Hue declared at a party
meeting: "German policy is made not in the Reichstag but in the
Prussian Landtag. That is not just the case today, but has always
been so", and called for increased agitation on the issue.¹

Many meetings on the franchise question were held on 1907 and 1908, during
the run-up to the Landtag election of 1908. Some were so popular that
people had to be turned away and party members made way for non-members.
After one meeting in January 1908 a small street demonstration took
place in Bochum, against the wish of the party leadership; only around
one hundred demonstrators took part, and it was quickly broken up by
the police with three arrests; this was the first reported unauthorized
political street demonstration in Bochum.² The franchise campaign was
more subdued in 1909, but picked up in early 1910. Meetings - and in
Hordel a torch-lit procession - were held in January 1910, and mass
meetings in February attracted around 5,000 people in Bochum and 3,000
in Gelsenkirchen. These meetings were followed by planned street
demonstrations - the first in either town. These demonstrations passed
off without incident, but in Dortmund there was conflict with the police
and a demonstration was broken up. The Bochum police warned the SPD
that in future any unauthorized demonstrations would be stopped. In

1. ibid. 1612.1907.
2. STASS, RA I 100, Volksblatt 25, 26.8.1908.
March many more protest meetings were held, and on 10 April the largest mass meetings of the entire pre-war period: some 15,000 were estimated to have gathered at Bochum's main meeting hall, the Schützenhof, and were addressed from three platforms. In Dortmund over 20,000 heard Karl Liebknecht and others. This marked the climax of the campaign. Open air meetings on the issue in October 1912 were not well attended, and in 1914 the party expressed disappointment at the lack of enthusiasm amongst "the masses" on the issue. 1

The Landtag franchise agitation in the Ruhr, despite the particular impetus given by the aftermath of the 1905 strike, was but part of a wider national campaign. 2 It is particularly interesting as the only significant instance of widespread party mobilization outside Reichstag elections, and the only issue on which the SPD adopted such provocative tactics as the street demonstration and the really large mass meeting. The issue clearly aroused strong and widely-shared feelings. Yet it did not represent any fundamental conflict with the party's generally moderate and pragmatic policies. The demand was essentially the limited one of equal parliamentary representation in Prussia; despite the resistance to its implementation under the Wilhelmine system, it was fundamentally a liberal "reformist" issue, on which the most right-wing social democrat could agitate harmoniously with the left. The only conflicts were over methods, and here the Bochum SPD showed its characteristic conservatism: a call for the use of the political mass

1. STA.: Bochum Landratsamt 178, Amt Nordel to ILB 17.1.1910; IZF Arbeiter Zeitung 3, 4, 6, 9, 10.1911, 10.7.1914.

2. For the campaign in Germany, see Groh Negative Integration und revolutionärer Attentismus.
strike on the issue was decisively rejected at the party's last pre-
war general meeting.  

Conclusions
The labour movement in Pochum and the eastern Ruhr adopted a generally
moderate and cautious approach. This was in large measure the
product of the social, religious and political divisions within the
working class, which weakened the appeal of more radical policies,
and which left workers at the mercy of their employers. It was hoped
that through a strict concentration on organisation and the issues of
the work place some sort of unity could be constructed, sufficient at
least to overcome the lack of solidarity which so weakened mining
strikes. A refusal to undertake strikes until they could be backed by
all-embracing and effective mass action, and the consequent stress on
disciplined organisation rather than spontaneous industrial militancy
was thus the product of the repeated strike failures and working class
disunity which we noted in the previous chapter.

The hopes of achieving through disciplined organisation the success
which so eluded the spontaneous strikes were not, however, realised.
The Alter Verband was not able to attract more than a fairly small
proportion of the mine-workers, and the union movement remained
divided into four separate organisations. Nor were the unions able to
co-operate with each other for more than limited periods. Even more
serious, however, was the fact that most of the miners remained outside

1. The voting against the mass strike resolution was 42 to 29; StAB,
h82, Polizei-Präsident Pochum to APA 2.7.1911; Groh Integrative
any union at all. On the political front too, the SPD was unable to overcome the deep denominational divisions within the working class. The Centre, the Polish nationalists and also the National Liberals, the employers' party, continued to attract very significant numbers of working class votes: over the entire period between 1893 and the outbreak of the war, indeed, the SPD's underlying position as the first choice of around a third of the voters in Bochum hardly improved at all.

Yet despite the failures of the Alter Verband and the SPD, there were remarkably few signs of significant radical opposition in the pre-war years. Within the SPD in the eastern Ruhr the radicals were few and showed little ability to win significant support. No-one appears to have viewed the possibility of political (as against industrial) strikes by the miners as other than doomed to failure. Any illusion that a policy of uncompromising industrial militancy by the Alter Verband might unite the miners and inflict a defeat on the employers was dashed by the 1912 strike fiasco. The previous defeat of the SPD in Bochum had also clearly demonstrated the continued strength of political Catholicism and Liberalism. The sense of failure and disillusion which afflicted the labour movement in the final pre-war years was not the product of the triumph of futile over positive policies: it was the result of a real lack of alternatives.
CONCLUSION

I

In the 1920's G.D.H. Cole contrasted the coal miners of Britain with other workers:

"The miner not only works in the pit, he lives in the pit village, and all his immediate interests are concentrated at one point. The town factory worker, on the other hand, lives often far from his place of work and mingles with workers of other callings. The townsman's experience produces perhaps a broader outlook, and a quicker response to social stimuli coming from without; but the miners' intense solidarity and loyalty to their unions is undoubtedly the result of conditions under which they work and live...their isolation ministers to their self-sufficiency and loyalty one to another". 1

This perception has been broadly accepted and developed by subsequent writers. Kerr and Siegel, in a famous study, described the miners as an "isolated mass". More recently, the Ruhr miners of the nineteenth century have been said by Crew to have experienced a profound sense of "occupational community". In the most substantial recent study of their history, Tenfelde has emphasized the unifying features of what he sees as the miners' common experience of social decline and repression.

It is clear that the miners of the Ruhr did have important experiences in common, could and did on occasion show militancy and solidarity, and were sometimes, though by no means always, isolated from other workers. Nevertheless, the persistent theme which has emerged in the present study is the fundamental importance of the profound and continuing divisions within the new working class of miners (and other workers) who inhabited

the Ruhr. Some social cohesion certainly existed among particular
groups of workers, but the working class as a whole was characterized
more by divisions and social fragmentation.

This absence of working class unity was the product of several factors.
The very substantial and continuing influx of workers to the area, com­
bined with high and sustained migration within the Ruhr itself, meant
that throughout our period the working class was an unstable and rapidly
changing entity. Coming from many different backgrounds, with differ­
ing cultural traditions and speaking differing languages and dialects,
the new workers had little in common except the experience of work itself.
Divisions were perpetuated and reinforced in the new industrial setting
by such features as company housing, frequently allocated on an ethnic
basis and isolated even from the homes of fellow-workers, and the
important role of denominational organisations within the social and
community life of the district. Loyalties remained focused on particu­
lar small groups, defined often in terms of ethnic origins or religious
allegiance, and not on the working class generally.

The feature which did perhaps hold out the prospect of transforming
the working class (using the term as a socio-economic category, not as
process in the manner of E.P. Thompson) into a united entity, conscious
of its common interests and common opposition to the employers and the
ruling powers in society, was the experience of work itself. Here the
miners in particular did have much in common: pit work varied little in
essence from one mine to another, and most of the miners carried out
broadly similar tasks; divisions between men at work were generally the
product of differences in age rather than the result of permanent divisions between "skilled", "unskilled" etc. such as those found in other work settings. Common dangers and mutual reliance underground added to the potential which work itself offered to create a sense of common fate and solidarity.

The experience of work also provided the fuel to the expression of discontent and conflict between workers and employers. Pit-work was hard, dangerous and unpleasant. Accidents and sickness were common, Discipline was often harsh, and the miners were subject to apparently arbitrary acts by foremen. It was better paid than some other jobs, and pay was higher in the Ruhr than in many other parts of Germany. Nevertheless, many miners' earnings were barely enough to ensure survival, particularly for those with large families and those whose strength was undermined through sickness or injury. Moreover, earnings fluctuated markedly, depending substantially on the particular immediate characteristics of the current coal face at which the man was employed, and on the changing economic climate in which the industry operated. The hours of work also fluctuated with the trade cycle, so that booms in particular were accompanied by growing pressure on the men to work longer and longer hours.

It is hardly surprising that discontent was felt by many miners, and that they sought means to improve their situation. Normally they did this as individuals, by looking for a better job at some other pit (a widespread practice encouraged by the monthly bargaining sessions over wages, but discouraged by company housing), or by simply taking some
time off unofficially. The most dramatic expression of discontent was the strike. In addition to their visibility and drama, strikes were particularly significant since they were collective acts: they might therefore transform the frustrations and protests of individuals into collective - perhaps class - consciousness and action.

Miners' strikes were fairly common in the Ruhr. Like absenteeism and job-changing, their incidence was closely related to the trade cycle, reflecting the changing relative power of employers and employees. Almost all strikes were spontaneous, often starting against the express wishes of the miners' official leaders. Many started among the younger mine-workers, reflecting not merely their youth and greater independence, but also the fact that they were paid on the relatively inflexible system of fixed shift wages, and were less able to resort to job-changing to boost their earnings. Some strikes never spread beyond these younger workers.

The issues raised in strikes reflected the frustrations at work which produced them. Higher pay and shorter hours were almost always demanded, and a common third group of demands sought increased dignity and rights for miners at work, including the ending of the more arbitrary powers of mine officials and some kind of voice in pit affairs. The demands reflected not only perennial discontents, but also the sharpening of conflict, due to the greater pressures from above and the disappointed hopes of the men, during the onset of economic booms.
In their results, however, most strikes were disappointing. They generally failed to win more than partial support, remaining limited to one pit or a group of pits and sometimes failing to win general support even at the main pits affected. There were two important exceptions, 1889 and 1905, when around 80 per cent of Ruhr mine-workers joined in the stoppage. Even then, however, this high degree of solidarity could not be sustained: in 1889 it began to wane after a few days; and although it lasted for a matter of weeks in 1905, even then there was growing recognition that it could not be sustained for the months which might be necessary to force major concessions from the employers.

The inability of the miners to actually achieve in their strikes the sustained solidarity which was needed to effectively combat the employers, was reflected in the absence of concrete gains won. At no stage did the employers make significant concessions as a result of strike action; the limited improvements which did follow the 1889 and 1905 stoppages came from the Government and not from the mine owners. Rather than concessions, indeed, strikes were usually followed by fines, sackings and lock-outs of militants. The "class conflict", which was undoubtedly present in the Ruhr pits, thus did not produce a "class consciousness" able to unite the miners and provide a solidarity strong enough to overcome other differences and achieve real success. Without such solidarity, however, wildcat strikes offered little prospect other than continued defeats for the miners, followed by further victimization of militants.
It is against this background that the history of the labour movement, and particularly its most important pillar, the trade unions, must be set. The labour movement sought to create through organisation the unity and strength which the working class otherwise so conspicuously lacked. The very creation of unions was a recognition that wild-cat strikes alone were not enough: strikes in 1868, 1872 and 1889 were rapidly followed by union-founding initiatives, and the 1905 strike was followed by a great increase in union membership. The strength of the union was precisely that it represented an alternative to the generally futile and sometimes disastrous unplanned strikes.

From the beginning therefore, there was an in-built tension between the concept of organisation through trade unions and the strike propensities of Ruhr miners. The aim of organisation was to construct a force which would be able to take on the employers on more equal terms. In particular, it was necessary to ensure that the overwhelming majority of miners followed collective decisions: this in turn meant emphasis on discipline and organisational growth, and on the need to build up adequate financial reserves to sustain poor families for a possibly long struggle.

The emphasis on political neutrality and on the need to avoid precipitate strike action were natural and perhaps inevitable consequences.

1. The 1893 and 1912 strikes, for which in contrast to the others the unions were clearly responsible, were followed by a decline rather than growth in union membership.
With a working class so deeply divided politically as that in the Ruhr, political neutrality was essential for any organisation which aspired to unite the broad mass of the workers. Since strike defeats involved such dire consequences for individual militants and for general morale, as well as further jeopardising the organisation itself, union leaders developed a policy of caution, designed to husband resources until there was a reasonable chance of success. The fact that all miners' unions from the 1870's onwards adopted an ostensible policy of political and religious neutrality, and that a deliberately cautious approach towards industrial conflict was adopted systematically from at least the 1890's, suggests that these policies were primarily a response to the industrial and social realities of the area.¹ It was above all the near disaster of the early 1890's, when strike after strike ended in complete failure, and which almost saw the complete destruction of the recently established union, which impressed the leadership with the importance of avoiding conflicts which they were bound to lose.

From the beginning the miners union was the main focus of the labour movement in the Ruhr. The SPD, by contrast, was only legalized in 1890, a year after the formation of the Alter Verband, and did not rival the union in membership or strength. The SPD was itself largely dominated by Alter Verband members (despite the theory of union political neutrality), and was unlikely to adopt policies at variance with those of the union. More fundamental, however, was the fact that the SPD faced

¹. It is unconvincing to ascribe such policies to the self-seeking tendencies of a class of functionaries, not least because such a class did not really emerge until the 1900's. See G. Fülberth "Zur Genese des Revisionismus" pp.1-21.
many of the same underlying social constraints as the union. Just as
the union aimed to unite all miners within an organisational framework
which would offer them a strength which they otherwise lacked, so the
SPD aimed to unite workers generally through an organisation which
could achieve a common class programme.

The heavy stress on the virtues of organisation, which was characteristic of the labour movement in the Ruhr (and elsewhere in Germany) thus needs to be set against the continuing and deep divisions within the working class itself. It was these divisions which drove working class leaders to seek to create, through disciplined organisation, an instrument which might achieve the united and successful class mobilisation and action which seemed otherwise impossible. To stress the social divisions, the fluidity and rapid change in social relations and the general absence of united working class "community" - themes which have been central to this study - is thus important, not merely to redress the balance against those who stress "occupational community" and common working class experiences, but to provide an adequate explanation of the character of the labour movement which emerged in the Ruhr.¹

The fact that the policies of the labour movement were in large measure an attempt to face and overcome the social conditions in the area, did not mean that the hopes of the leaders were actually achieved. Despite

¹. It is perhaps significant that Tenfelde's recent study ends in 1889, the year of a major strike which was not wholly unsuccessful, and not in the early 1890's when the wave of industrial militancy ended in a series of defeats; similarly, Crew does not examine the labour movement, and thus does not question why "occupational community" was not reflected in it.
their efforts to reassure doubters, neither the Alter Verband nor the SPD was able to overcome the divisions within the working class. In particular, the Catholic Gewerkverein and the Centre party maintained their hold over Catholic workers, with the sole but significant exception of the Poles— who turned not to the social democrats, but to nationalist leaders. But it was not only Catholic workers who rejected the Alter Verband and the SPD: the National Liberal Party, the political vehicle of the Ruhr employers, continued to appeal successfully to working class voters; and a majority of Ruhr mine-workers remained outside the union movement altogether. Moreover, even those who did join union or party were not necessarily thereby firmly committed to it. Both organisations suffered from high membership turnover, severely limiting their ability to speak with confidence in the name even of their existing members, let alone the majority of workers who remained outside. The divided, highly mobile and unsettled character of the newly forming working class in the Ruhr thus undermined settled organisational work.

The labour movement thus failed in the pre-war years to unify the working class and to seriously threaten the power of the employers. This was particularly clearly demonstrated in the twin defeats of 1912, when the miners' strike ended disastrously within days and the SPD lost two Ruhr Reichstag seats. These failures meant that before 1914 the employers remained virtually as strong as ever. Attempts to create working class unity and solidarity - "class consciousness" - thus failed, and an overwhelmingly working class constituency, which had experienced significant conflict between workers and employers, was represented by the political party of the employers.
Was there a viable alternative to the policies adopted by the labour movement? Would a more militant or radical approach have been more successful? It is, of course, impossible to be sure. In the case of the Alter Verband, it is possible that a policy which attempted to support and build on the undoubted periodic militancy of the miners might have paid dividends. By the late 1900's the Alter Verband itself realized that a policy of simply restraining and avoiding strikes until general unionization was achieved could not be indefinitely sustained: the outbreak of the 1905 strike, despite all the efforts of the unions' leaders to restrain it, clearly demonstrated that the miners were not indefinitely willing to forgo this important weapon. The strike of that year which was followed by a considerable growth in membership of all the unions, also illustrated that a more dynamic relationship between industrial conflict and organisational growth existed or could exist. Nevertheless, it remains doubtful whether a more militant union policy would have achieved sustained success: the repeated strike failures of the early 1890's were an important factor behind the union collapse which followed, and illustrated the very great dangers of a simple reliance on industrial militancy; even the 1905 strike failed to seriously shake the power of the employers, although it did bring some concessions from the Government; and when three of the four miners' unions did finally combine in an aggressive strike policy in 1912, the result was an unmitigated disaster, followed by a fall in membership, a serious demoralization and a growth in "yellow" unionism.

Nor is it easy to see that the SPD would have been more successful with a more radical approach. It would clearly have alienated the sympathy of
the *Alter Verband*, which, whatever its own weakness, did include many more members than the SPD itself. It would have prevented any chance of co-operation on class lines with radical Catholics, as was briefly attempted after 1905. But perhaps most important, there is no sign of significant demand for more radical policies by its own supporters. The occasional industrial militancy of the miners should not be confused with political radicalism. Strikers were concerned with the workplace, and although it might be argued that their aims of shorter hours, better pay and greater dignity at work were unachievable within the contemporary capitalist economic framework, this was not a perception which was generally shared. Strikes were supported by Centre and National Liberal party supporters and by Polish nationalists as well as by social democrats, and they saw no inherent conflict between their desire for improvements in their conditions of work and their religious and political loyalties. Strikes for political ends - for instance, on 1 May - won little or no support. Within the SPD in the eastern Ruhr such demands as there were - and they were very few - for a more radical political approach came from individuals rather than "the masses", and most notably from Konrad Haenisch. It is perhaps significant that the issue which aroused the greatest political mobilization apart from Reichstag elections was the "democratic" but not specifically "socialist" demand for reform of the Prussian franchise.

The one area in which concessions were won was from the state itself. The Wilhelmine state's attitude towards the miners and their grievances veered between a policy of harsh repression and attempts to secure compromise and harmony, even on occasion against the wishes of the employers.
Thus the 1889 and the 1905 strikes, despite their failure to defeat
the employers, were followed by some concessions from the Government;
the most notable of these was, perhaps, the introduction after 1905
of the workers' committees; and the Radbod disaster of 1908 led the
Government to introduce workers' safety officers. These concessions,
despite their limitations, showed that the state was not unambiguously
on the side of the employers, but could provide a possible counter-
weight which might be used by the labour movement to compensate for its
own lack of industrial strength: and they helped to establish and
legitimize the Alter Verband and other unions, in the eyes of the miners
if not in those of the employers, by establishing platforms from which
they could speak and posts to which their nominees could be elected and
where they could be seen to represent the miners. Thus, even before
1914, the combination of the underlying weakness of the labour movement
and the occasional willingness of the Government to intervene on behalf
of the miners and against the desires of the employers, laid the founda-
tions for the policy of union-Government co-operation which was to be so
central both during the war and, more importantly, after it.
The years after 1914 saw major changes in the Ruhr, as elsewhere in Germany. Nevertheless, in many respects earlier trends were continued and even intensified. The outbreak of war seems to have been accepted and even welcomed by most of the people. The Bochum social democratic press regarded it as "self-evident" that its readers would do their military duty and would accept the necessities of war - including the banning of party meetings.\(^1\) Overt opposition was very rare: one protest meeting in Bochum, a man arrested in Gelsenkirchen for delivering "inflammatory speeches", and a Polish nationalist arrested in Gerthe following signs of anti-German feeling among some Poles.\(^2\) The news of war on 25 July 1914 left the people in the streets of Bochum quiet and chastened; five days later several thousand marched through the town singing patriotic and soldiers' songs, and ended with cheers for the Kaiser and the town.\(^3\)

Despite the restrictions and the imposition of military controls over many aspects of political and industrial life, the war did provide an unprecedented opportunity for the labour movement to break out of the powerlessness which had made it ultimately ineffective throughout the pre-war years. The trade unions were granted a degree of recognition and influence which they had never previously possessed: at the national level this was most clearly expressed in the Gesetz über den

\(^1\) IZF, Volksblatt 1.8.1914. In fact the party was soon able to resume meetings.

\(^2\) IZF, Volksblatt 6.8.1914; StAB, h82, Amt Harpen to KLB 12.8.1914; StAB, h82, Polizei-Präsident Bochum to RPA 30.5.1916.

\(^3\) StAB, Märkischer Sprecher 27,31.7.1914.
vaterländischen Hilfsdienst of 1916, which was strongly opposed by the mine owners. The latter continued to refuse to recognize the unions until the collapse of 1918: but the unions were nonetheless able to secure important concessions from the Government and military authorities: in 1915 it was only strong Government pressure which forced the mine owners to pay wage increases to compensate for the rapid rise in the cost of living, and the pattern was to be repeated. This pattern of occasional state intervention on behalf of the workers in the mining industry and against the wishes of the employers was not, as we have seen, a new development: the war meant a strengthening of the already implicit - and sometimes explicit - tripartite character of industrial relations in the industry, with increased state control and a shift in the balance of power in favour of the miners' organisations.

The war thus provided the unions with a legitimacy, role and influence which they had generally failed to achieve before 1914. This position depended ultimately on the Government: it had not been won in battle with the employers. The unions were therefore loth to jeopardize their position by conflicting too seriously with the Government and military authorities. Despite growing criticism of rising prices, inadequate food supplies and mounting industrial profits, the miners' unions generally sustained their policy of maintaining industrial peace. The ground was thus prepared for the post-war period, when a far more sympathetic Government and a range of quite unparalleled concessions from

the employers (union recognition, abandonment of the "yellow" unions, introduction of the 8-hour day) created a yet stronger position for the unions - a position which they were even less willing to endanger by pursuing policies which in their eyes threatened to produce chaos and a wholly unpredictable situation in which all the gains might be lost.

The new-found legitimacy of the trade unions extended also to the SPD. Otto Hue told a meeting in 1915 that, "the war has not originated with Germany: it was imposed on her", and maintained that, "both the party's living and dead leaders had always said that they would intervene for their fatherland and reach for their weapons if a threat came to the frontiers". It was necessary, however, to secure "a peace which would not mean permanent enmity for us with other countries", and he criticized the handling of the food situation and the profits which the Junkers were making. The war had changed the position of the party: "Before the war the social democrats were accused of being 'vaterlandslose Gesellen' and insurgents. But they wanted to stop such imputations after the war and insist on equal consideration with the other parties". The local party in Bochum directed its efforts to the maintenance of its own structure and organisation, to encouraging the authorities to make proper provision for the widows, the wounded and for ordinary workers, and to preparing for the eventual demobilisation: "When the war comes to an end the party organisation will face difficult tasks. Comrades returning home from the field will certainly not want to face a ruined organisation and to have to help re-build what they left in good condition".

1. StAB, h82, Polizei Gerthe to KLB 8.11.1915.
2. StAB, h82, Polizei Bochum to RPA 30.5.1916.
It is not surprising that when the SPD eventually divided, the Bochum party came out firmly in support of the orthodox majority. At the party's 1916 general meeting Haase's action was denounced as "irresponsible", and Liebknecht was described as a "wild brain" of no political significance. Speakers claimed that the radical minority had virtually no support in the area: a Gelsenkirchen speaker maintained that there at least nine-tenths of the party members supported the majority. The "policy of 1 August" was approved as the only one which represented the interests of the working class.

The labour movement in the eastern Ruhr thus found during the war a way out of the impasse of the final pre-war years, acquired a new legitimacy, and carried further its pre-war commitment to the avoidance of industrial conflict and to political moderation. After the revolution of 1918 these policies were even more firmly espoused, as the SPD itself became the governing party and as a whole series of fundamental and long-standing union demands were at last granted.

Continuity in the history of the labour movement was matched, however, by continuity in conflict and unrest in the Ruhr pits. Industrial unrest was not marked during the first two years of the war, but as prices rose, food shortages became more serious and the pressure of work increased, it became more common. In autumn 1916 the first significant war-time miners' strikes broke out, and in the following years they became

1. ibid. In 1917 the newly formed USPD was unanimously rejected by the party leaders in the eastern Ruhr: J. Reulecke "Der erste Weltkrieg und die Arbeiterbewegung im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet" in Reulecke (ed) Arbeiterbewegung p.227.
more and more common. Like miners' strikes in earlier years, they concentrated on immediate issues of survival and the work place: the food shortages naturally focused attention on questions of food supplies and wages. Only in the last months of the war were more political demands (peace and, on occasion, democracy) raised, as it became increasingly clear that these were the prerequisites for any other improvements. The political changes of November 1918 did not - despite their great importance for the unions and the SPD - in themselves meet the concerns and aspirations of the miners, and 1919 saw a further wave of strikes.

The similarity of post-war strikes with earlier ones was obvious. The Alter Verband and the SPD were unable to exercise effective control over their outbreak: but neither were the independent socialists, the communists or the newly-powerful syndicalists; "leaders" and organisations of all kinds were generally obliged to follow rather than to lead what were essentially spontaneous and unplanned stoppages, and were often driven to adopt progressively extreme demands to preserve credibility. Some of the forms taken by strikers, such as the tours of strikers from one pit to the next, were highly reminiscent of earlier stoppages.

3. These strikes have been extensively discussed. See especially P. von Oertzen "Die grossen Streiks der Ruhrbergarbeiter schaft im Frühjahr 1919" in E. Kolb (ed) Vom Kaiserreich zur Weimarer Republik (Köln, 1972); H. Mommse "Die Bergarbeiterbewegung an der Ruhr 1918 - 1933" in Reulocke (ed) Arbeiterbewegung; Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus; J. Tempke "The rise and fall of the Essen model" in Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (Juni, 1977, Heft 2).
4. Thus the demand for the 8-hour day was replaced by one for 7 hours and later for 6 hours.
5. Lucas stresses the importance of such forms of action rather than specific strike demands: Arbeiterradikalismus p.181.
of pre-war strikes to be limited to miners at specific pits or to certain districts was also maintained; it was not until April 1919 that an overwhelming majority of miners joined in a united stoppage. Finally, the demands raised by the strikers continued to be for better pay, shorter hours and the introduction of a less arbitrary, more humane and a more participatory regime in the pits themselves. Political aims were of peripheral importance: even the demand for the "socialization" of the mines, which was a central issue in early 1919, was not raised until two months after the revolution, and one of its chief merits was its vagueness, and the lack of concern shown even by its supporters about the fundamental questions of ownership. The demand for socialization was generally seen as a means of ensuring that the pits were run in a manner more responsive to the wishes and concerns of the miners. When workers' councils were elected their prime concern was to remove unpopular mine officials: after this few of them seem to have had clear aims.

The war and its immediate aftermath therefore carried considerably further the labour movement's reliance on the Government to secure gains which were not otherwise to be readily achieved: both unions and SPD were first recognized by and accommodated within the Wilhelmine state, and then assumed state responsibility themselves. Change in the Ruhr

1. On the lack of precision and clarity behind the concept, see Tempke "Rise and fall of the Essen Model"; Mommsen "Bergarbeiterbewegung" p.292; Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus pp.177, 185-188.

came from above rather than from below. The gains won were not sufficient, however, to remove the tensions and conflicts in the mines themselves, so that the traditional pattern of localized and unco-ordinated unrest reappeared, with a force unparalleled even in 1889-1891 or in 1905. The war and revolution thus widened still further the gap which had always been present between the "old" style of unco-ordinated strikes and conflicts to which the miners readily resorted and the "new" style of patient organisational effort which the leaders sought to foster. By 1920 the gap between the aims and concerns of many miners and those of the unions and SPD had become so wide that a state of civil war was reached in the Ruhr. Even without such overt and explicit conflict, however, the absence of real unity and common understanding within the working class and between workers and their main industrial and political organisations meant that even the gains which had been won stood on uncertain foundations, and left them dangerously vulnerable to shifts of political fortune and to any revival of the forces of reaction.

The Ruhr was not in any simple sense "typical" of Germany. The overwhelming dominance of heavy industry, the rapid growth and sheer scale of the industrial complex and the nature of the denominational and ethnic divisions within the working class were not exactly paralleled elsewhere. Different social and economic conditions naturally influenced the shaping of the labour movement, which consequently showed somewhat different characteristics in different localities.  

Nevertheless, despite undoubted differences between regions, many of the broad problems and issues which were so crucial in the Ruhr may well have been important elsewhere. We know, for instance, that rapid population growth, migration and high working class mobility were common in many industrialising centres: industrialization was rapid, and the transformation of society from agriculture to industry was proceeding apace throughout this period.  

It has recently been suggested that the "ideal type" of urban society in Germany at this time saw a largely settled bourgeoisie, contrasting with "a constantly mobile working class": up to one third of all rented dwellings were vacated within one year, and only a small minority were inhabited by the same person for over five years.

1. Lucas usefully compares and contrasts many aspects of working class experience in the differing settings of Remscheid and Hamborn: Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus. Regional differences in the history of the labour movement are also discussed in Ritter Arbeiterbewegung.

2. In 1881, the number of people employed in industry was still only about equal to those employed in agriculture and forestry; by 1907 double the number employed in agriculture etc., were employed in industry. W.O. Henderson The rise of German industrial power, 1831-1914 (London, 1975) p.234.

3. Niethammer and Brüggemeier "Wie wohnten Arbeiter im Kaiserreich?" p.84; Langeviesche "Wanderungsbevugungen" p.10.
Facts such as this suggest that it is not merely in the Ruhr that we must avoid thinking of "the working class" as an established and settled entity in the years before 1914.

What this meant for working class society, whether it undermined a sense of community and growth of solidarity, requires further investigation in particular localities. If effective solidarity was hard to achieve amongst miners, was it often present amongst other workers? Did the newcomers to the cities bring with them their old loyalties and sense of identity, whether defined in religious, ethnic, linguistic or political terms, or did they submerge their former identity within a new, broader and specifically industrial working class culture? Here the activities of a range of cultural bodies, of which the Churches were amongst the most important, are relevant. As the history of the growth of Polish nationalism in the Ruhr illustrates, the impact of industrialisation and social change may be to strengthen rather than to diminish traditional conflicts and divisions within the working class. Similar problems were present in the eastern border areas of Germany and wherever there were significant numbers of national, ethnic, religious or other minorities. Was the presence or the absence of such minorities more common in working class society at this time? Should we even think in terms of one "working class" society, or rather of mutually exclusive "sub-cultures", of which the socialist sub-culture was but one?

1. It has been suggested that Berlin in the late nineteenth century became "an a-religious city". How true and how typical was this? Did the constant influx of newcomers to city life provide a continued basis for working class religious life and loyalty? Attention has recently, and belatedly, been directed to the Catholic "sub-culture", but relatively little attention has been given to working class Protestantism. See G. Masur Imperial Berlin (London, 1974) p.108; D. Blackbourn "The problem of democratisation: German Catholics and the role of the Centre Party" in Evans (ed) Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany; Ross Beleaguered Tower.
The experience of work itself was obviously crucial to the history of the working class, but has as yet received minimal attention from historians. Class conflict was focused primarily on the work place, and the development of class consciousness was thus likely to be shaped around the issues at stake there.¹ What were these issues, how were they pursued and with what success? What implications did industrial structure, plant organisation, skill divisions and other aspects of work experience have for working class solidarity and unity? Did different types of industry produce different types of conflict and action, and if so why? These vital questions obviously demand a comparative approach, building on a number of detailed local and industrial studies.²

Finally, the link between these social and industrial factors and the history of the organised labour movement needs to be investigated in detail. The pragmatic, cautious, non-radical labour movement in the Ruhr lay within the mainstream of the movement in Germany: explicit revisionism was rejected, but efforts were devoted to the building of organisation and the winning of elections, not to the making of revolution. We have suggested that this approach was substantially an

¹. There were very few "political" strikes in Germany at this time: nearly all were concerned with the "economic" issues of work. D. Fricke Zur Organisation und Tätigkeit der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (Leipzig, 1962) p.255.

². One issue which would be raised is the existence and meaning of the term "labour aristocracy". For a recent review and discussion of the (far more developed) debate on this question in Britain, see H.F. Moorhouse "The Marxist theory of the labour aristocracy" in Social History (Jan. 1978) pp.61-82. Hitter has pointed to a significant distinction between the scope for "political" protest in large-scale and small-scale industry: Arbeiterbewegung chapter 4.
attempt to face and overcome the difficult social and industrial conditions in the area, reflecting particularly the social disunity and continued conservatism of the working class and the failure of the strike wave of the early 1890's. Did similar factors account for the similar approach adopted elsewhere? Was it the absence of such difficulties, or a more purely political domination by particular ideologists, which secured the strength of radicalism in some other centres? It is hoped that this study can help to stimulate further questions and further enquiry into these and related issues, so central to the history of the German working class.

1. Such an investigation would need to focus primarily on the trade unions which, despite general recognition of their growing pre-eminence over the SPD, have been accorded relatively little attention by historians.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

1. Bergbau Archiv (Bergbau-Museum, Bochum)
   1U/2U, 25, 119 - Gewerkschaft Friedrich der Grosse
   18/22, 23 - Zeche Hamburg und Franziska
   18/62, 63, 65, 68, 71 - Louise Tiefbau
   18/85 - Arbeiterausschuss Sitzungen 1909-1910 (various mines)
   18/122 - Zeche Bruchstrasse
   20/Ab5 - "Chronik Zeche Hannover 1906-1939"
   20/C2, C56a - Krupp'sche Mitteilungen 1911, 191U (Essen)

2. Fried. Krupp Hüttenwerke AG Werksarchiv (Bochum)
   126 00/2 - Generalversammlungen
   129 00/15, 18, 20, 22-24 - Verwaltungsraths-Protokolle 1887-1917
   151 00/2 - Correspondenz betr. Arbeiter 1896
   166 00/9 - Westfälische Eisen- und Drahtwerke AG Geschäftsberichte 1897-1931
   217 00/1 - Streiks
   315 00/3 - Zeche ver. Engelsburg
   398 00/1 - Strike 1889

3. Staatsarchiv Münster
   Landratsamt Bochum:
   177 - secret zu haltende Sachen 1875-1925
   178 - sozialdemokratische Demonstrationen gegen das Landtagswahlrecht 1905-1918
Landratsamt Gelsenkirchen:
40 - Polizei 1905-1924
42 - Gewerkverein der Metallarbeiter 1889-1909
45 - Gewerkverein christlicher Bergarbeiter 1894-1909
48 - Jünglings- und Gesellenvereine 1900-1916
53 - Ausstand 1899

Oberbergamt Dortmund:
1400 - Beschwerden
1735, 1750, 1764, 1772, - Untersuchung 1905
1803 - Bergarbeitertag 1890
1837 - Arbeiterwohnungen 1901-1918
1840 - Arbeitsnachweise 1904-1912
1843-1846 - Ausstand 1905
1849, 1850, 1852 - Arbeiterausschüsse 1905-1914
1856, 1857, 1859 - Ausstand 1912

Oberpräsidium:
2693, 2694, 2831 - Sozialdemokratie
2828, 2828a - Strike 1889
2833 - Mitgliederbestand des deutschen Bergarbeiterverbandes 1902-1908

Regierungs-Bezirk Arnsberg:
B59 - Streik 1872
I/74-79 - Lohnbewegung 1896-1905
I/82, 83 - Gewerkverein christlicher Bergarbeiter Deutschlands 1902-1908
I/92-100 - Sammelberichte...betr. Stand der sozialdemokratischen Bewegung 1894-1908
I/102-104 - Vereine
I/623 - Jahresberichte des Gewerberaths 1880-1894
I/1163 - Statistik über Streiks 1908-1910
I/1176, 1179 - Ausstand 1912
I/1185 - Arbeiter-Entlassungen 1896-1914

I GA/336 - gewerbliche Angelegenheiten
I GA/355 - Zustand der ... Privathüttenwerke und metallischen Fabriken 1872-1906
I GA/392-394 - Jahresberichte des Gewerberats 1900-1922

4. Stadtarchiv Bochum
Akten des Landrats-Amtes des Landkreises Bochum:
368 - Haltung der ultramontanen und socialdemokratischen Presse 1874-1896
331 - Lage der Industrie 1908-1924
336-335 - Bergarbeiterstreik 1889 (and aftermath)
337 - Ausstand 1891
338 - Ausstand 1893
339 - Zechenschutzwehren 1894-1912
350, 351 - Ausstand 1899
352 - Arbeiter-Unruhen 1899-1914
353 - Ausstand 1900
354 - Arbeitseinstellungen 1900-1927
355-358 - Bergarbeiterstreik 1905
359, 360 - Bergarbeiterstreik 1912
361-365 - Arbeiterbewegung 1889-1915
378-384 - sozialdemokratische und anarchistische Bewegung 1895-1918
5. **Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv** (Dortmund)

**K2 series:**

43 - Industrie der Stein- und Erden 1900-1914
69 - Statistik 1899-1913
73, 315, 316, 989, 1074 - Zentralverband deutscher Industrieller
90 - Sozialpolitik 1900-1913
92 - Deutscher Handelstag 1910-1911
199 - Arbeiterbewegungen 1899-1918
208 - Eingaben 1899-1908
213 - Bergbau 1900-1905
223 - Arbeitskammern 1908-1911
264 - Baukonzessionen 1901-1903
342, 857 - Verkehr mit dem Regierungs-Präsidenten 1899-1914
359 - Bevölkerungsstatistik 1899-1913
388 - Kolonialvereine 1885
458 - Handelskammergesetz Geschäftsordnung 1870-1872
522 - Industrie- und Gewerbeausstellung Düsseldorf 1901-1902
669 - Lehrlingsausbildung 1907-1913
683 - Arbeitsverhältnisse 1900-1910
705, 955 - Arbeiterschutz 1897-1914
725 - Bergbau und Kohlenhandel 1912-1916
741 - Eisen- und Metallindustrie 1900-1912
816 - Lebensmittelverwaltung 1911/1912
903 - Arbeitsnachweis 1900-1914
923 - Arbeitslosigkeit und Arbeitslosenversicherung 1913-1920
933 - Ministerium für Handel und Gewerbe 1907-1912
1003 - Baugewerbe 1905-1906
1062, 1552, 1553 - Kaufmännische Vereine 1897-1914
B. PRINTED SOURCES

1. Contemporary Newspapers and periodicals

Arbeiter Zeitung (Dortmund)

Bergarbeiter Zeitung (formerly Deutsche Berg- und Hüttenarbeiter Zeitung)

Bergknappe

Frankfurter Zeitung

Glückauf. Berg- und Hüttenmännische Zeitung

Märkischer Sprecher

Rheinisch-Westfälische Arbeiter-Zeitung

Times

Tremonia

Volksblatt (Bochum)

Westfälische Arbeiter Zeitung

Westfälische Freie Presse

Zeitschrift für das Berg-, Hütten-und Salinenwesen

2. Annual Reports

Bericht des Magistrats zu Bochum, 1861-1913

Geschäftsbericht des Gewerkvereins christlicher Bergarbeiter Deutschlands, 1907-1912

Kassenbericht des Verbandes der deutscher Berg- und Hüttenarbeiter 1891-1897
3. Statistical series

Statistik des Deutschen Reiches (Berlin)
Statistisches Jahrbuch Deutscher Städte (Breslau)
Statistisches Jahrbuch für den Preussischen Staat (Berlin)

4. Contemporary books, articles, printed documents etc.

G. Adelmann (ed) Quellensammlung zur Geschichte der sozialen Betriebsverfassung Ruhrindustrie 2 vols (Bonn, 1960)

Die Arbeitsverhältnisse im Steinkohlenbergbau 1912-1926 (Berlin, 1928).

Der Ausstand der niederrheinisch-westfälischen Bergleute im Mai 1889 (Styrum-Rheinland and Leipzig, 1889)

Der Bergarbeiter-Ausstand des Jahres 1889 im preussischen Abgeordnetenhaus (Essen, 1890)

Bochumer Verein Bericht über die Jubel-Feier des Bochumer Vereins (Bochum, 1891)

Denkschrift über die Untersuchung der Arbeiter- und Betriebs-Verhältnisse in den Steinkohlen-Bezirken (Berlin, 1890)

R. Ehrenberg and H. Racine Krupp'sche Arbeiter-Familien (Jena, 1912)

A. Erdmann Die christliche Gewerkschaften (Stuttgart, 1914)

Festschrift zur Feier des 50-jährigen Bestehens des Vereins für die Bergbaulichen Interessen im Oberbergamtsbezirk Dortmund in Essen (Essen, 1908)

L. Fischer-Eckert Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Frauen in dem modernen Industrieeort Hamborn im Rheinland (Hagen, 1913)

C.J. Fuchs Zur Wohnungsfrage (Leipzig, 1901)

Gainsborough Commission Life and Labour in Germany (London, 1906)

P. Göhre Die evangeli-sch-soziale Bewegung (Leipzig, 1896)

Hasslacher "Was ist unter 'ortsüblicher Tagelohn'...zu verstehen?" in Glückauf 19.9.1903.
Herbig "Schwierigkeiten des Lohnwesens im Bergbau" in Glückauf 28.12.1907

F. Hoffeld Bilder aus dem Bergmannsleben (Dortmund, n.d.)

O. Hue Die Bergarbeiter 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1910 and 1913)

O. Hue Neutrale oder parteiische Gewerkschaften? (Bochum, 1900)

O. Hue Die Verteuerung der Lebensmittel und ihre Ursachen (Bochum, 1911)

R. Hundt Bergarbeiter-Wohnungen im Ruhrrevier (Berlin, 1902)

E. Hüsgen Ludwig Windthorst (Köln, 1907)

H. Imbusch Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisation im deutschen Bergbau (Essen, 1908)

H. Imbusch Bergarbeiterstreik im Ruhrgebiet 1912 (Köln, 1912)

25 Jahre Bergwerksgesellschaft Hibernia: Festschrift aus Anlass des 25-jährigen Bestehens der Bergwerksgesellschaft Hibernia 1873-1898 (Düsseldorf, 1898)

W. Jansson Die Zustände in deutschen Fabrikwohnungswesen (Berlin, 1910)

H. S. Jevons The British Coal Trade (London, 1915 (reprinted 1969)).

E. Jüngst "Der Ausstand der Bergarbeiter vom März 1912 in statistischer Darstellung" in Glückauf 29.6.1912.

G. Kessler Die deutschen Arbeitgeber-Verbände (Leipzig, 1907)

F. Knipping Zur Bochumer Eingemeindungsfrage (Bochum, 1917)

W. Köllmann and A. Gladen (ed) Der Bergarbeiterstreik von 1889 und die Gründung des 'alten Verbandes' in ausgewählten Dokumenten der Zeit (Bochum, 1969)

W. Köpping (ed) Schwarze Solidarität (Oberhausen, 1974)

Lange "Die Wohnungsverhältnisse der ärmeren Volksklassen in Bochum" in Schriften des Vereins für Socialpolitik Bd.XXX (Leipzig, 1886)

M. Metzner Die soziale Fürsorge in Bergbau (Jena, 1911)

R. Nichols Political Parties (New York, 1959 edition)

H. Münz Die Lage der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrrevier (Essen, 1909)

E. Oberschuir Die Heranziehung und Sesshaftmachung von Bergarbeitern im Ruhrkohlenbecken (Düsseldorf, 1910)


L. Pieper Die Lage der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet (Stuttgart and Berlin 1903)
R. Schneider Die Entwicklung des niederrheinisch-westfälischen Bergbaus und der Eisen-Industrie (Bochum, 1899)

M. Seippel Bochum Einst und Jetzt (Bochum, 1901)

H. Silbergleit Preussens Städte (Berlin, 1908)

Spring Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen im Kreise Hörde (Hörde, 1897)

Verband der Bergarbeiter Deutschlands Bergarbeiter! Aufgewacht und erkennen eure Macht! (Bochum, 1911)

Verband der Bergarbeiter Deutschlands Bergbaulicher Verein und Arbeitswilligenschutz (Bochum, 1912)

Verband der Bergarbeiter Deutschlands Instruktion für Mitglieder der Bezirks- leitungen und Ortsverwaltungen (Bochum, 1910)

Verband der Bergarbeiter Deutschlands Kalender für Bergarbeiter 1913 (Bochum, 1912)

Verband der Bergarbeiter Deutschlands Notizkalender für Berg- und Hütten arbeiter 1902 (Bochum, 1901)

Verein für die bergbaulichen Interessen im Oberbergamtsbezirk Dortmund Die Entwicklung des Niederrheinisch-Westfälischen Steinkohlen-Bergbaues Ed.XII (Berlin, 1904)

Vorstand der Gesellschaft für Soziale Reform Aufsätze über den Streik der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrbezir (Jena, 1905)

G. Werner Unfälle und Erkrankungen im Ruhrbergbau (Essen, 1910?)

Westfälischer Verein zur Förderung des Kleinwohnungswesens Ergebnisse der Wohnungsaufnahme in westfälischen Städten vom 1 Dez 1905 2 vols (Münster, 1907 and 1909)

G. Wiebe Die Handelskammer zu Bochum 1856-1906 (Bochum, 1906)

Zur Feier des 25-jährigen Bestehens der Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG (Düsseldorf n.d.)

5. Secondary books and articles


Bergwerks-Gesellschaft Hibernia 1873-1923 (no place, nd)

W. Bacmeister Louis Baare. Ein westfälischer Wirtschaftsführer aus der Bismarckzeit (Essen, 1937)

W. Bacmeister Gustav Knepper. Das Lebensbild eines grossen Bergmanns (Essen, 1950)


H.M. Bock Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus' in Deutschland. Ein Versuch (Frankfurt, 1976)


W. Brepohl Der Aufbau des Ruhrvolkes im Zuge der Ost-West Wanderung (Recklinghausen, 1948)

W. Brepohl Industrievolk Ruhrgebiet (Tübingen, 1957)


F. Bürgdörfer "Migration across the frontiers of Germany" in W.F. Willcox (ed) International Migrations (New York, 1929)

K. Burgess The Origins of British Industrial Relations (London, 1975)

T. Coleman Passage to America (London, 1974 edition)


B.L. Coombes These poor hands (London, 1939)

H. Corsten Bibliographie des Ruhrgebietes 3 vols (Essen and Düsseldorf, 1913, 1955 and 1962)

D. Crew "Definitions of Modernity: Social Mobility in a German Town, 1880-1901" in Journal of Social History (Fall, 1973)

D. Crew "Soziale Schichtung und Mobilität in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert" in Geschichte und Gesellschaft (Heft 1, 1975)


H. Croon "Die wirtschaftlichen Führungsschichten des Ruhrgebiets in der Zeit von 1890 bis 1933" in H. Patze (ed) Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte (Göttingen, 1972)

H. Croon and K. Utermann Zeche und Gemeinde (Tübingen, 1958)

W. Däbritz Bochumer Verein für Bergbau und Gußstahlfabrikation in Bochum (Düsseldorf, 1934)

N. Dennis, F. Henriques and C. Slaughter Coal is our Life (London, 1974 edition)

A.V. Desai Real wages in Germany (Oxford, 1968)


L. Ferenczi "International Migration Statistics" in W.F. Willcox (ed) International Migrations (New York, 1929)

Festschrift zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Gewerkschaft ver. Constantin der Grosse, Bochum (Essen, 1948)

Festschrift zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Zechen Hannover und Hannibal (Bochum, 1947)

W. Fischer Die Bedeutung der preußischen Bergrechtsreform (1851-1865) für den industriellen Ausbau des Ruhrgebiets (Dortmund, 1961)

W. Fischer Herz des Reviers; 125 Jahre Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Industrie- und Handelskammer-Bezirks Essen (Essen, 1965)

W. Fischer "Konjunktur und Krise im Ruhrgebiet seit 1840 und die wirtschaftspolitische Willensbildung der Unternehmer" in Westfälische Forschungen Bd.21 (1968)

J. Foster *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1974)

D. Fricke *Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1869-1890* (Leipzig, 1964)

D. Fricke *Zur Organisation und Tätigkeit der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1890-1914* (Leipzig, 1962)

D. Fricke *Der Ruhrbergarbeiterstreik von 1905* (Berlin-Ost, 1955)


J. Fritsch *Eindringen und Ausbreitung des Revisionismus im deutschen Bergarbeiterverband (bis 1914)* (Leipzig, 1967)

P. Fröhlich *Rosa Luxemburg* (London, 1940)

G. Fülb erg "Zur Genese des Revisionismus in der deutschen Sozialdemokratie vor 1914" in *Das Argument* (März, 1971)

Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG 1873-1913 (Düsseldorf, n.d.)

A. Gladen "Die Streiks der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet in den Jahren 1889, 1905, und 1912" in J. Reulecke (ed) *Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr* (Wuppertal, 1974)

H. Graf *Die Entwicklung der Wahlen und politischen Parteien in Gross-Dortmund 1871-1957* (Hannover, 1958)

H. Grebing *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (München, 1966)

D. Groh *Negative Integration und Revolutionärer Attentismus* (Frankfurt a.M., 1974)

Gussstahlwerk Witten AG 1854-1954 (Witten, 1954)

A. Hall *Scandal, Sensation and Social Democracy* (Cambridge, 1977)

A. Heinrichsbauer *Harpener Bergbau AG 1856-1936* (Essen, 1936)

A. Heinrichsbauer *Industrielle Siedlung im Ruhrgebiet* (Essen, 1936)

K.A. Hellfaier "Probleme und Quellen zur Frühgeschichte der Sozialdemokratie in Westfalen" in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* (1963)

H. Hellgreve *Dortmund als Industrie- und Arbeiterstadt* (Dortmund, 1951)

H.O. Hemmer "Die Bergarbeiterbewegung im Ruhrgebiet unter dem Sozialistengeset" in J. Reulecke (ed) *Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr* (Wuppertal, 1974)

W.O. Henderson *The rise of German industrial power, 1834-1914* (London, 1975)


A. Howkins "Edwardian Liberalism and Industrial Unrest" in History Workshop Journal vol.1 (Autumn 1977)

M.P. Jackson The Price of Coal (London, 1974)


100 Jahre Stahlform Guss (Bochum, n.d.)

Ein Jahrhundert Heinrichshütte Hattingen, 1854-1954 (Darmstadt, n.d.)


A. Kalis Kirche und Religion im Revier: die Geschichte der Arbeiter- und Knappenbewegung im Ruhrgebiet (Essen, 1968)


H.G. Kirchhoff Die staatliche Sozialpolitik im Ruhrbergbau 1871-1914 (Köln and Opladen, 1958)

C. Klessmann "Klassenentwicklung und nationales Bewusstsein. Das Verhältnis zwischen der Polnischen Berufsvereinigung (Zzp) und den deutschen Bergarbeitergewerkschaften im Ruhrgebiet 1902-1923" in Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (Juni 1974, Heft 2)

M.J. Koch Die Bergarbeiterbewegung im Ruhrgebiet zur Zeit Wilhelms II (Düsseldorf, 1954)

W. Kollmann Bevölkerung in der industriellen Revolution (Göttingen, 1974)


W. Kollmann "Binnenwanderung und Bevölkerungsstrukturen der Ruhrgrößtädte" in Soziale Welt Bd.9 (1958)
W. Köllmann "Die Geschichte der Bergarbeiterchaft" in W. Först (ed) 
Ruhrgebiet und Neues Land (Köln, 1968)

W. Köllmann "Industrialisierung, Binnenwanderung und 'Soziale Frage'
 in Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte (1959)

W. Köllmann "The Population of Germany in the Age of Industrialization"
 in H. Müller (ed) Population Movements in Modern European 
History (New York, 1961)

W. Köllmann "Urbanization in Germany at the height of the industrialization 
period" in Journal of Contemporary History (July, 1969)

K. Koszyk Anfänge und frühe Entwicklung der sozialdemokratischen Presse im 
Ruhrgebiet, 1875-1908 (Dortmund, 1953)

K. Koszyk "Die sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung 1890 bis 1914" in 
J. Reulecke (ed) Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr (Wuppertal, 1974)

H. Krauss and H. Ostermann Verbandskatholizismus? (Kevelaer, 1968)

J. Kuczynski Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter unter dem Kapitalismus 
(Berlin-Ost, 1961 onwards)

D. Langewiesche "Wanderungsbewegungen in der Hochindustrialisierungsperiode. 
Regionale, interstätische und innerstädtische Mobilität in Deutschland 1880-1914" in Vierteljahresschrift für 
Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte (1977)

Leich Harpen und Harpener Bergbau. Ein Beitrag zur Heimatgeschichte 
(Bochum, 1937)

V.L. Lidtke "August Bebel and German Social Democracy's Relation to the 

V.L. Lidtke The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany 1878-1890 
(Princeton, 1966)

H. Linde "Die soziale Problematic der masurischen Agrargesellschaft und die 
masurische Einwanderung in das Emscherrevier" in H.U. Wehler (ed) 
Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte (Köln, 1970)

E. Lucas Arbeiterradikalismus: Zwei Formen von Radikalismus in der 
deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (Frankfurt a.M., 1976)


R. Mützenkirchen Der sozialdemokratische Verein für den Reichstagswahlkreis 
Dortmund-Hörde (Dortmund, 1970)

F. Mariaux Gedenkwort zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Harpener Bergbau AG 
(Dortmund, 1956)
F. Mariaux Gedenkwort zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Industrie- und Handelskammer zu Bochum (Bochum, 1956)


M. Martiny "Die politische Bedeutung der gewerkschaftlichen Arbeiter-Sekretariate vor dem ersten Weltkrieg" in H.O. Vetter (ed) Vom Sozialistengesetz zur Mitbestimmung (Köln, 1975)


G. Masur Imperial Berlin (London, 1974)


P. Möllers "Die Essener Arbeiterbewegung in ihren Anfängen" in Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter (1960)

H. Mommsen Bergarbeiter: Ausstellung zur Geschichte der organisierten Bergarbeiterbewegung in Deutschland (Bochum, 1969)

H. Mommsen "Die Bergarbeiterbewegung an der Ruhr 1918-1933" in J. Reulecke (ed) Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr (Wuppertal, 1974)


K.E. Moring Die sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen (Hannover, 1968)

J.P. Nettl "The German Social Democratic Party 1890-1914 as a political model" in Past and Present no. 30 (1965)

J.P. Nettl Rosa Luxemburg (Oxford, 1966)

W. Nettmann Witten in den Reichstagswahlen des Deutschen Reiches 1871-1918 (Witten, 1972)

W. Neumann Die Gewerkschaften im Ruhrgebiet (Köln, 1951)

L. Niethammer and F. Brüggeimer "Wie wohnten Arbeiter im Kaiserreich?" in Archiv für Sozialgeschichte (1976)

P. von Oertzen "Die grossen Streiks der Ruhrbergarbeiterchaft im Frühjahr 1919" in E. Kolb (ed) Vom Kaiserreich zur Weimarer Republik (Köln, 1972)

N. Osterroth Otto Hue. Ein Lebensbild für seine Freunde (Bochum, 1922)

E. Peerenboom Statistik der katholischen caritativen Einrichtungen Deutschlands 2 vols (Freiburg, 1922)

N. Osterroth Otto Hue. Ein Lebensbild für seine Freunde (Bochum, 1922)

E. Peerenboom Statistik der katholischen caritativen Einrichtungen Deutschlands 2 vols (Freiburg, 1922)

N. Osterroth Otto Hue. Ein Lebensbild für seine Freunde (Bochum, 1922)

E. Peerenboom Statistik der katholischen caritativen Einrichtungen Deutschlands 2 vols (Freiburg, 1922)

N. Osterroth Otto Hue. Ein Lebensbild für seine Freunde (Bochum, 1922)

E. Peerenboom Statistik der katholischen caritativen Einrichtungen Deutschlands 2 vols (Freiburg, 1922)

N. Osterroth Otto Hue. Ein Lebensbild für seine Freunde (Bochum, 1922)

E. Peerenboom Statistik der katholischen caritativen Einrichtungen Deutschlands 2 vols (Freiburg, 1922)

N. Osterroth Otto Hue. Ein Lebensbild für seine Freunde (Bochum, 1922)

E. Peerenboom Statistik der katholischen caritativen Einrichtungen Deutschlands 2 vols (Freiburg, 1922)

N. Osterroth Otto Hue. Ein Lebensbild für seine Freunde (Bochum, 1922)

E. Peerenboom Statistik der katholischen caritativen Einrichtungen Deutschlands 2 vols (Freiburg, 1922)

N. Osterroth Otto Hue. Ein Lebensbild für seine Freunde (Bochum, 1922)

E. Peerenboom Statistik der katholischen caritativen Einrichtungen Deutschlands 2 vols (Freiburg, 1922)
R. Samuel "The Workshop of the World" in History Workshop Journal (Spring 1977)

K. Saul Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung im Kaiserreich (Düsseldorf, 1974)

A. Schmidt Lang war der Weg (Bochum, 1958)

R.T. Schnadt Bochum. Wirtschaftsstruktur und Verflechtung einer Grossstadt des Ruhrgebietes (Bochum, 1936)

L. Schofer The formation of a modern labor force. Upper Silesia, 1865 to 1914 (Berkeley, 1975)

L. Schofer "Patterns of Workers' Protest: Upper Silesia, 1865-1914" in Journal of Social History (1972)

S.H. Scholl (ed) Katholische Arbeiterbewegung in Westeuropa (Bonn, 1966)

C.E. Schorske German Social Democracy (Harvard, 1955)

A. Schuchman Codetermination: Labor's Middle Way in Germany (Washington, 1957)

F. Schunder Tradition und Fortschritt (Stuttgart, 1959)

R. Schwenger Die betriebliche Sozialpolitik im Ruhrkohlenbergbau (München and Leipzig, 1932)

W.H. Scott et al Coal and Conflict: a study of industrial relations at collieries (Liverpool, 1963)

E. Shorter and C. Tilly Strikes in France 1830-1968 (Cambridge, 1974)

Soziale Arbeit: BVG 1812-1912 (Hattingen, 1942)

E.G. Spencer "Between Capital and Labor: Supervising Personnel in Ruhr Heavy Industry" in Journal of Social History (1975)


H. Spethmann Die geschichtliche Entwicklung des Ruhrbergbaus um Witten und Langendreer (Gelsenkirchen, 1937)

P.N. Stearns "Adaptation to industrialization: German workers as a test case" in Central European History (1970)

P.N. Stearns Lives of Labour (London, 1975)


Die Steinkohlenbergwerke der vereinigte Stahlwerke AG: die Schachtanlage Bruchstrasse in Bochum-Langendreer (no place, 1931)

Die Steinkohlenbergwerke der vereinigte Stahlwerke AG: die Schachtanlage Carolinenglick in Bochum-Hamme (no place, 1930)

Die Steinkohlenbergwerke der vereinigte Stahlwerke AG: die Schachtanlage Engelsburg in Bochum (no place, 1930)

Die Steinkohlenbergwerke der vereinigte Stahlwerke AG: die Schachtanlage Dannenbaum in Bochum-Laer 2 vols (no place, 1937)

Die Steinkohlenbergwerke der vereinigte Stahlwerke AG: die Schachtanlage Friedlicher Nachbar in Bochum-Linden 3 vols (no place, 1939)

Die Steinkohlenbergwerke der vereinigte Stahlwerke AG: die Schachtanlage Prinz Regent in Bochum-Wiemelhausen 2 vols (no place, 1939)


J. Tempke "The rise and fall of the Essen model" in Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (Juni 1977, Heft 2)


K. Tenfelde "Konflikt und Organisation in einigen deutschen Bergbaugebieten 1867-1872" in Geschichte und Gesellschaft (1977)


E.P. Thompson "Eighteenth-century English society: class struggle without class?" in Social History (May, 1978)


W. Timm Der Bergarbeiterstreik 1889 und die Anfänge der Arbeiterbewegung in Unna (Unna, 1969)


H.U. Wehler Bismarck und der Imperialismus (Köln, 1969)

H.U. Wehler Sozialdemokratie und Nationalstaat (Göttingen, 1971)

G. Werner Ein Kumpel. Erzählung aus dem Leben der Bergarbeiter (Berlin, 1929)

P. Wiel Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Ruhrgebietes (Essen, 1970)

I.D. Wolcke Die Entwicklung der Bochumer Innenstadt (Kiel, 1968)

E.A. Wrigley Industrial growth and population change: a regional study of the coalfield areas of north-west Europe in the later 19th century (Cambridge, 1962)


6. Unpublished books and theses

B. Aumann Die Bergarbeiterbewegung im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet im Spiegel der regionalen Presse (Staatsexsarbeiten, Bochum, 1973)


K.H. Hemeyer Der Bochumer Wirtschaftsraum von 1840 bis zur Jahrhundertwende (Diplomarbeit, Bochum, 1960)

G. Kliss Die Wanderung der Ostpreußen nach Bochum um die Jahrhundertwende im Zuge der Ost-West-Wanderung (Seminararbeit, Bochum, 1971)

A. Siegel Mein Lebenskampf. Das Schicksal eines deutschen Bergarbeiters (MS, Bochum, 1931)