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**Partin, Anna, Ph.D.**

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The labor movement of salt miners in Wieliczka

by

Anna Partin

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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## INTRODUCTION

Much attention in the West has focused on recent events in Eastern Europe; the Solidarity labor movement has entered the consciousness of every reader, listener, and viewer of current events. As Miszlivetz (1991) points out, "there was a turning point in world history in 1989... history only now began...after decades of enforced economic stagnation and political statis." These same ideas were the guiding principles of the working class after beginning the new era of history at the end of World War II. After the tremendous struggle against exploitation and domination, Polish workers saw the dawn of a new history.

Just as the workers in the 1980s struggled against political oppression and economic injustice, so did the workers at the dawn of the Second Republic (1918-1939) fight for independence from capitalistic economic oppression and the desire to transform the country to socialism. Although the movements differ, the common denominator was the hope of transforming the old country into a new and just society. But whereas the movement of the 1980s gained tremendous international recognition, the earlier movement was surrounded by virtually total silence in the international scientific arena.

The purpose of this work is to explore this neglected period of the Polish labor movement. The focus of this study is a modest one. It analyzes various aspects of the labor movement during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in one specific location. The period at the end of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century was pronounced with the formation and development of the modern labor movements. The specific location, i.e., nation, region, industry matters, since where the phenomena takes place how they occur (Tilly, 1990; Scoville, 1973). Focusing on a particular location will not only allow to delineate the general patterns common to all labor movements, but also depicts specificity of the local movements in a particular industry.

The following study explores factors which shaped the formation, development, and goals of the labor movement in one of the mining industrial centers in Poland. First, the study analyzes the initial structures such as the mining community, the market, and political parties and their influence on the shape and evolution of the labor movement. Second, it examines the role of ideology and intellectuals on the development of miners' class consciousness. Finally, the study analyzes the impact of changes in the market economy on the modification of miners' goals.

The following section outlines a basic conceptual model which guides the study. The Scoville's (1973) model is used to describe the formation and evolution of labor movements. Since the model considers only general propositions, it omits an explanation of the impact of the work community, and specifics of the market and ideology. These gaps are filled by extrapolating propositions from related theories.

While many theories of labor movements have been proposed, the majority give only a partial account of the phenomena. More importantly, very few studies provide a comprehensive model of the forces and factors shaping labor movements. In part, the literature is limited since it tends to focus on trade union activities as the single most obvious characteristic of the working-class movement, and treats labor theory as though it were confined to the study of the origins, characteristics, and advantages of trade unions (Laslett, 1979). Subsequently, labor movements have been defined as trade union movements by emphasizing the organizational aspects of unions, their structure, leadership, and goals. This, in effect, led to a division between the study of labor-union theory and the study of working-class culture.

The second type of study views working-class culture as a sole precondition of the formation of labor movements and their various components. Some proponents of the approach focus uniquely on the community claiming that the traditional

values and everyday practices of the working class led to the participation in labor movements and to their formation (Fantasia, 1988; Calhoun, 1982; Clarke, Critcher, and Johnson, 1979).

Yet evidence suggests that political parties and the market were essential elements in the formation of labor movements. The political parties were the principal mechanisms of labor movement in the national political arena. The trade unions created by the party were inclined to adopt strategies compatible with party ideologies in pursuing goals and strategies. The workers' movements cannot be understood apart from the activities of a particular form of political party (Sirriani, 1980; Cronin, 1983). The market serves as a direct channel for the increase of workers' job control and benefits, as well as defining the potential membership of a union (Marks, 1989). Subsequently the political, social, and market milieu in which the labor movement arises has an immense impact on its strategy which, in turn, influences its structure and ideology (Sturmthal, 1973).

A general model of the development and evolution of the labor organizations which emphasizes their goals and structures was introduced by Scoville (1973). In the course of industrialization, some central points of conflict or disagreement concerning the nature of society are likely to develop. The groups in which the conflict is concentrated

seem to follow stable historical patterns. There are groups which focus on workers and which might be organized by workers themselves, middle-class reform groups whose economic advancement is not paralleled by alike developments in the political arena, and groups of intellectuals who protest inequality of gains and burdens distributions. In diverse combinations, these groups constitute the labor movement. The relationships among these groups against a background of economic, political, and social factors mold the particular forms which the labor organizations will assume. Two groups, i.e., middle-class reformers and revolutionary intellectuals, have a significant impact on shaping of the labor movement. Both groups disapprove with some part of society and the goals toward which it is aimed. Activities of these groups correspond to the choice of purposes of the labor movement and their political preferences which impact on the structure of workers' organizations.

Initial goals of the labor movement are shaped by political conditions in society. The political dimensions seem decisive in the labor movement objectives since the repressive political structure exercise restraints upon collective economic actions. Subsequently political change serves as a necessary prerequisite to economic activity of the labor movement. In such circumstances, political goals have greater appeal to those being organized.

Two aspects of a political framework affect the importance of political goals of the nascent labor movement. First is class structure and the distribution of political power. The labor movement places more stress on redistribution of power if it is concentrated in the hands of few. Second is the system's responsiveness and ability to change. The more responsive and flexible the system, the less probable that a political tradition will emerge in the labor movement.

The factors influencing orientation of labor movements affect the resulting organizational structures. Political objectives imply a need for an organization that is effective in the political environment. In the realm of political action, diverse forms evolve. If the group allied with workers is middle-class reformist, the path toward political action most often stresses education. Workers' education, pursued in small local groups, results in a decentralized base for the trade union movement. Organizational strength and loyalties are formed at the lower levels of the movement. If the revolutionary group allies with workers, more direct forms than education frequently are chosen. Management of such activities requires a mass organization under centralized control, causing central bodies to arise at the regional level. The revolutionary, unlike the middle-class reformer workers, do not require legitimization through educational

advancement since the revolutionary-intellectual's theory supplies legitimization for their actions.

Scoville (1973) outlines prevalent aspects of industrial structures. The first is industries' propensities to strike. Industries characterized by isolated, dangerous, or repetitive work tend to produce higher levels of labor-management conflict and greater radicalism. Employment, then, may influence the shape and goals of the trade union movement. The second dimension of the industrial structure which influences the character of labor organizations is the size distribution of enterprises. Small industrial plants provide an insecure base for organizations, and the power and authority of the local trade unions will be relatively small. Small plants are the least organized, a result of rational allocation of organizational and dues collecting talents. This type of plant will reinforce the tendency toward centralized, industrial-type unions.

Another factor which influences the shape of labor organizations is the overall structure and competitiveness of a nation's product and factor markets. The major aspects of market structure are the transportation and communication network. Isolation of communities will affect an accumulation of moderate quantities of monopoly power by labor and management. The stronger the competitive nature of domestic

markets, the more centralized is power within the national trade unions.

The general excess of labor increases the efficacy of political action of the trade union movement. However, some factors limit the persuasiveness of labor market looseness. If conditions exist for economic success, the organizations originate in the competency in this sphere. Other factors which separate labor markets and, subsequently, create difficulty of the movement, include discrimination and ethnicity. These two aspects negatively affect homogeneity across labor markets.

Ideology plays a particularly significant role in the structuring of labor movements. The main ideas which characterize the thinking of the labor movement's leaders and trade unions are diverse. Experiences and developments in the relationships between the party and unions will produce a unique ideology which may be inconsistent with the long-run survival of the organization.

The objective chosen by the labor movement and the structure of organization will yield reliance on specific types of weapons which enter into ideology, shaping the movement's future actions and course of evolution. The political objectives will create more emphasis on political organizations and political weapons. The general strike serves as both a weapon for labor and a unifying force of the

labor movement. If the general strike enters the period when the economic goals take precedence over political motives, it tends to serve as a wrong weapon through use of which workers will not be able to obtain significant gains in economy.

The Scoville's model outlined the factors which shape the evolution of a labor movement, giving particular emphasis to goals and organizational structures. As factors which shaped the formation change, labor movements' goals and structures will respond to these modifications in the environment.

Additionally, the initial structure of the labor movement will exert an impact on the future course of its development. This will be dictated by persistence of ideology formed at the beginning, the survival of main institutions, and alterations in industrial and market structures.

To be able to apply Scoville's model to a particular case, the argument must be carried a step further. Although the model outlines aspects of industrial structure and points out that isolation and dangerous work will lead to labor-management conflict, no attention is given by the model to the workers' community which is one of the factors that shapes the development and objectives of the union.

Since the work stood at the center of life for the majority of workers, their work brought them into daily contact with the dominant culture. The intensity of this experience outweighs the influence of any factors of

community, such as education, family, or leisure organizations, which are most often cited (Jones, 1977; Evans, 1982; Scoville, 1973). The characteristics of workers' occupations, as well as the homogeneity, professional hierarchy, systems of pay, and worker-manager relations, helped to establish the basis for collective mobilization. The structural aspects of the work community served as prerequisites in the formation of strong worker organizations, and aided in the development of the union (Evans, 1982; Marks, 1989).

The second element which needs further explanation is the market structure. The labor movement reflects the structure of the market. The market can be viewed as a center where workers mobilize their resources to advance material goals and control over shop-floor conditions (Griffin, et al., 1986). Markets are defined as centers of competition between workers and employers. They are the arena where workers engage their labor power in return for wages, status, and other job rewards (Kallerberg and Sorensen, 1979). The market also creates conflict between workers and employers due to their antagonistic interests. Employers seek to maximize production and lower the production cost, i.e., lower the cost of labor. Workers seek the highest possible wages. Markets then affect the labor movement twofold. First, the union will strive to

achieve the highest wages and job security. Second, the changing market will influence economic goals of the union.

Scoville's (1973) model stresses the importance of ideology and the role of intellectuals in structuring a labor movement and general strike as major weapons in obtaining political objectives. Yet the workers' major weapon for achieving goals is class consciousness. The intellectuals promote class consciousness among workers through theoretical knowledge, agitation, and propaganda. The intellectuals play an immense role in transforming the workers' parochial belief system into a class-based vision of the future.

The following section outlines the major concepts used in the study. Labor movements have been conceptualized from a variety of perspectives, for example, as political movements seeking to overthrow the system of capitalist wage labor, to organize workers and unions, and to seek improvements of economic conditions through bargaining or legislation of work. Most often, however, labor movements have been defined as trade union movements, which emphasizes their organizational aspects, nature, leadership, and goals. For purpose of the study, labor movements are viewed as a combination of diverse groups, i.e., workers and political parties in pursuing economic advancements and political goals.

The work community is defined as the working conditions and relations which shape the formation and objectives of

workers' movement. The following elements comprise of the work community: workers occupation homogeneity, professional hierarchy, systems of pay, and worker-manager relations.

The market is defined as an arena where workers mobilize resources to advance their material goals and control over shop-floor conditions. It is a center for the competition that transpires between workers and employers. The market is a stage where workers engage labor power in return for economic rewards, such as wages and status. However, markets not only distribute the produced goods, but also create antagonistic interests between workers and employers. Employers seek to maximize production for profit and to expand reproduction of capital. Since labor represents the greatest constituent cost of production, employers seek to lower labor costs. However, the livelihood of workers depends on attaining the highest possible wage; therefore their interests oppose those of employers.

Repression is viewed as state, capitalist, or employers actions which discriminate against organizations seen as representing a basic challenge to the existing political and social order. The repressive practices lead to disorganization or attempts to diminish the importance of an organization perceived as opposing ideological orientations.

Parochial consciousness is an awareness of workers that generates challenges to existing local injustice, but does not

create workers' visions of society transformation. This type of consciousness is characteristic of what could be called the "pre-modern" labor movement.

Class consciousness is a recognition by the workers of structural determinants of their situation, and correct identification of the classes as a major factor promoting the political struggle of workers.

#### **Methodology**

The setting chosen for the study is the salt-mining center, Wieliczka, in the southern part of Poland. Wieliczka is well-suited for the study of labor movements. The Wieliczka mine settlement was the oldest and one of only a few industrial centers in an agricultural region with a strong base of Social Democratic Party and specificity of workers' community related to the mining industry.

The Wieliczka mine was founded in the middle of the thirteenth century. Since its beginning, the mine was state property and became one of the most important sources of state revenue (Dziwik, 1988; Gaweda, 1990). With the first partition of Poland in 1772, the Wieliczka settlement became a part of Galicia, a Polish region of the Austra-Hungarian empire. As a result of this annexation, the salt mine became the property of the Austrian state. After the First World War, Galicia was included within the boundary of the Polish

Second Republic (1918-1939). The newly created state reclaimed the ownership of the mine. Wieliczka played an important role in the formation and viability of the labor movement in the area (Dobrowolska, 1965; Dziwik, 1988).

The line of inquiry chosen for this study proceeds with an appreciation of history, yet the questions posed are sociological. Using the strengths of both disciplines, the study combines a descriptive narrative approach with sociologically focused analyses of how the historical specificity were experienced within the possibilities and restrictions established by existing social institutions.

Various scholars reflect on the benefits for sociology of links with history for the purpose of gaining a broader, more complete view of society (Wickham, 1990):

"...western sociological inquiry has witnessed the re-introduction of a historical perspective into the study of society. The combination of a historical functionalism and empirical studies...has been gradually undermined...As a result, the task of conceptualizing and explaining the nature of social change has began to be restored...Giving the rediscovery of the problem of social change it is scarcely surprising that sociologists have began to reopen channels of communication with historians (Holton, 1981)."

"There have been many attempts by sociologists and historians to bridge the gulf that separates their disciplines...[These attempts have led to] the intellectual project of a historical social science...This project is...part of the continuing effort to understand the formation, and transformation of...social units over long periods of time" (Alexander, 1981).

Sociologists can also profit from history by using historical methods in the analysis of data. In doing so, sociologists acquire a sharper sense of the relationships among social events over time.

"In order to appreciate how the institutions we study are molded by the passage of years, we probably need to learn how to think in narrative terms, to develop a feeling for the temporal nature of social forces; and the only way we are likely to attain these skills is to become more historical" (Erikson, 1970).

Use of the descriptive narrative method is also seen as a remedy when dealing with historical data which characteristically tend to be random, limited, and incomplete (Bradley, 1989). Studies in historical sociology allows not only for preliminary inquiry, but as Burke (1980) suggested, they benefit a future model which would take into account the diversity of long term trends, and specify the alternative paths and constraints. Such models would be of use for more accurate generalizations.

Sociology is currently facing a challenge from post-modernist philosophy "with its embargo on meta-narratives and its characteristic portrayal of social reality as made up of fragmented and incommensurable language games" (Lyotard, 1984). This fact calls for evaluation of many sociological approaches to analysis of social structure, while legitimating the presentation of the historian's traditional method, i.e., micro-narratives. Subsequently, it implies that one of the

ways forward for sociology is to link with history (Bradley, 1990).

Traditionally, sociologists viewed history as a data-bank, a resource from which to draw support for their models and theories, while having contemptuous attitudes toward historical methods and concerns. In response to recent challenges, the discipline has reconsidered its views of history, and developed a considerable respect for the narrative method (Stone, 1987; Bradley, 1990; Cahnman, 1976).

The few existing studies concerned with Wieliczka give only a brief account of the miners' labor movement. These studies provide accounts of only a few specific events related to the miners' trade union. This limitation of the previous studies can be in part attributed to the inadequate use of existing data.

The data for the present study were obtained from primary and secondary historical sources. The primary historical sources refer to evidence produced at the time of the event. The primary sources of data for this study comprises of archival documents focusing on various aspects of the salt mine in Wieliczka. For the first time, this study uses trade union documents. These documents are comprised of minutes of the labor union meetings, contracts negotiated with the management of the mine and various officials on the region and state level, and lists of demands introduced by the miners.

The other primary sources include various types of correspondence for the period of 1901 to 1939. Strike cards are documents describing every strike which occurred in the mine. Each strike card is a complete description of the reasons for a strike, number of strikers, length of a strike, and the results. The final primary source of data came from documents on production and business decisions.

Secondary sources are comprised of a collection of documents compiled by the engineer and archivist, L. Cechak, newspapers, "Naprzod" edited by the Socialist Party, and "Gornik" edited by the miners' trade union. The documents compiled by Cechak are a complete inventory of all archival records of the salt mine for the years 1772 to 1867. The documents had been classified as a secondary source since some of them were translated by L. Cechak and originals were impossible to obtain. All issues of the newspapers "Naprzod" between 1892 and 1939, and "Gornik" between 1921 to 1939, were reviewed. All articles from both newspapers which referred to Wieliczka's trade union, political parties, and the working environment of miners were included as evidence. Additional sources of data came from Polish and Austrian Statistical Year Books.

Data utilized in this study were found in the archives of the Cracow Museum of Salt-Making, where all documents related to the Wieliczka Salt Mine are located, and the Jagiellonska

Library in Cracow. The majority of data were collected during the summer of 1991. Some data were received prior to and following the visit to archives.

Using the above sources, it was possible to provide an overall picture of the Wieliczka labor movement. It was, however, difficult to find evidence about specific subjects. The difficulties in collecting the data cause specific limitations in the study not only with relation to concepts, but also to a specification of various documents. In some cases, the title of documents, page numbers, and other details are missing. The above limitations are due to the following: First, some archival data have been destroyed during political upheavals in the country. Second, the current Polish state policy is very restrictive, on reproducing original documents. Foreign scientists have limited use of documents relating to nation's affairs. Third, some documents are still in "the preparation process," and not available for public use. Fourth, with the recent political changes and closing of the party's centers, original materials regarding the party's and union's activities are impossible to obtain.

#### **Explanation of the Format**

The present section is intended as a general introduction to three distinct papers. The first paper analyzes the formation and development of the labor movement in its relation to the

work community, the market, and political parties. The specificity of miners' occupation, homogeneity of workers, professional hierarchy, systems of pay, and miner-manager relations created strong ties among miners which, in turn, helped to establish the basis for collective mobilization, delineate economic goals, and aid in development of the union. Changing market conditions affected labor force reduction that resulted in the quantity of collective bargaining and antagonistic relations between miners and management. The political parties served as the genesis of the miners' unions. They also impinged upon development and structure of the miners' unions.

The second paper highlights the ideological aspects of the movement. It examines the role of intellectuals and their ideology on development of miners' class consciousness. The intellectuals elevated miners' class consciousness through education, propaganda, and agitation, and transformed their parochial beliefs into a class-based vision of the future.

The third paper examines the influence of changes in the market economy on the economic goals of the miners' trade unions. The union operated in the specific economic conditions of a given state. The changes in the economic conditions affected the viability of the union, by changing the goals of the miners. In normal economic conditions, workers frame wage demands primarily in relation to the wages

paid to comparable groups of workers. Horizons are limited and expectations exceedingly modest when prices begin to rise. The stabilizing, conservative habits are altered and workers tend to narrow demands to only those pertaining to work security.

A general conclusion follows the three papers. Here a summary of the accumulative findings is found and suggestions for further research offered. All references used in the general introduction and conclusion are cited following the general conclusion. Otherwise each of the three papers contains its own references.

**PAPER 1. FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LABOR  
MOVEMENT IN WIELICZKA SALT-MINE**

### INTRODUCTION

The period from the end of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of World War II was a time of intensive increase of labor movements. Essential to the development of labor movements in Europe were trade unions and working class political parties.

The unions are oriented toward the future. Workers organize to attain a collective ability for strategy so as to defend or advance conditions of employment and improve their working lives. The ability to organize most often is contingent upon the strength and foundation of social bonds established in the past (Marks, 1989). Unions are particularly successful in places with a well developed work community. The work organization and the working environment create resources for the formation and endurance of workers' organizations.

The labor movement also reflects the structure of the market. It is the market which defines the potential membership of a union. In addition, the market serves as a direct channel for the increase of workers' job control and benefits (Marks, 1989).

Political parties have been the main device of labor on the national political stage. Unions which are created by the party tend to adopt strategies compatible with parties' ideologies. Subsequently, the workers' movement cannot be

understood apart from the activities of a particular form of political party (Sarriani, 1980).

Any workers' organization which adopts a particular ideological orientation is exposed to state hostility (Geary, 1981). The more intensive and longer lasting the state repression, the more drastic are the consequences (Lipset, 1983). The intensive repression causes the labor movement to diminish or even disappear, while a small amount of repression becomes a motivating factor in increasing labor activism (Olzak and West, 1991).

This paper discusses and analyzes various components of the labor movement in one of the oldest industrial centers in the southern part of Poland during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The study analyzes the formation and development of the labor movement in its relation to the mining work community, market, and political parties. The first part investigates the mining work community and work environment as prerequisites of the formation and development of the miners' movement. The two next parts focus on the salt market and its changing conditions, and the strength and influence of political parties on the movement, its formation, development, and viability.

#### SELECTION OF FRAMEWORK

Historically the labor movement had taken widely different forms, even within a single country. Larson and Nissen (1987) use the term "pragmatic" for those labor movements which ideologically accepted the capitalist system. Their strategies were related to improving the social and economic conditions of wage workers. At the other extreme, there were labor movements which rejected the ideology of the capitalist system and based their strategies on the basic objective of revolutionary and evolutionary changes of the social and economic institutions (Larson and Nissen, 1987; Meyers, 1962).

The majority of the European labor movements, however, did not assume either of these extreme positions. Most often, the ideology of the labor movements centered around societal change; but their strategies were for the most part related to economic improvements of the workers' lives. This fact can be attributed to a combination of factors which included the relationship of workers to those who employed them and those who recruited them into an organized labor movement (Bonell, 1980).

One of the common denominators of labor movements was creation of a labor movement organization which would achieve the goals of the movement. Trade unions were the

organizational instruments through which workers expressed their interests. Trade unions as organizations originating in particular industries (or occupations) were molded by the specifics of their members', their work experiences, and by national forces. The organization provided workers with the most fundamental prerequisite of gaining control over their working lives, that is, opening a prospect of conversion of sheer numbers into a resource of economic and political power (Marks, 1989; Lipset, 1960). In fact without an organization, it was very difficult to sustain political and economic opposition for an extended period of time. The employer usually sought to disorganize the antagonistic entity either directly or indirectly through manipulation of either the market or the political system (Griffin et al., 1986).

The ability to organize is largely determined by the social bonds established in the past. Groups which share distinctive identities and strong interpersonal networks can easily become mobilized (Tilly, 1978; Jenkins, 1983). Such preexisting groups then are based on strong forms of solidarity. The strongest workers' organizations were founded by workers who were members of cohesive occupational communities, formed close-knit groups in the work place, remained in the same occupational group for extended periods of time, and therefore shared cultural norms and expectations (Marks, 1989).

The union also reflects the structure of the market. The market was a center where workers mobilized resources to resist the power of capitalism and advance material goals as well as control over shop-floor conditions (Griffin, et al., 1986). The market, then, became the center of the struggle between workers and employers, since it was an arena where workers engaged their labor power in return for wages, status, and other job rewards (Kallerberg and Sorensen, 1979).

Markets not only distributed the produced goods; they also created antagonistic interests between workers and capitalists (Mandel, 1972). On the one hand, employers attempted to maximize the production of surplus value for profitability and the expanded reproduction of capital. Since the greatest constituent cost of the total production was labor, employers attempted to lower the cost of labor as much as possible. Since the workers' livelihood depended on securing the highest possible wage, workers developed common interests in opposition to employers (Griffin et al., 1986).

The political parties were a major device of labor in the national arena. In Europe, most of the trade unions evolved in close association with the working class parties, and their orientation reflected that of their establishers. Subsequently, unions which were created by a party tended to adopt strategies compatible with party ideology (Bonell, 1980; Marks, 1989).

### THE MINING COMMUNITY

The Wieliczka mine settlement is one of the oldest mining settlements in Poland. The salt mine was founded in the middle of the thirteenth century. From its beginning, the salt mine was the state's enterprise and one of the most important sources of state revenue. The workers were divided into two general categories: miners with hereditary rights to exploit salt, and workers employed to transport the salt (Piotrowicz, 1988, pp. 104, 129-132).

With the first partition of Poland in 1772, the salt mine became the property of Austria. It remained under Austrian control until the end of World War I. Austrian authorities introduced a new administrative order and a number technological improvements. The mine occupied the foremost place in Austrian industry due to its size and output. After World War I, the mine became the property of the new Polish state--the Second Republic (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 59, 65; Dziwik, 1988, pp. 223-225).

Throughout the history of the mine, miners were regarded as a distinctive group of workers characterized by living in isolation, highly strike-prone, and having specific social standards.

They lived in their own separate communities, have their own codes, myths, heros, and social standards. There were few neutrals to mediate the conflicts and dilute the mass. All people have their grievances, but what is important, is that all of the members of these groups have the same grievances (Kerr and Siegel, 1954, pp. 191-192).

The distinctiveness of miners might be attributed to several factors. The nature of the industry forced miners to live in socially isolated communities characterized by social cohesiveness and a propensity for group action (Meyer, 1962, p. 5).

The considerable and constant danger of salt mining work, created a special bond among workers. Additionally, miners could not be supervised on a regular basis (Marks, 1989, p. 163). The miners supervised each other and took care of one another.

In the Wieliczka salt mine, the profession of miners was hereditary. Quite often, more than three generations were employed in the mine. The strong kin and inter-generational relations influenced social relations among workers in the mine.

Mining traditions in Wieliczka mine families contributed to formation and sustaining some traits of mining culture. This culture had some specific characteristics which were expressed in the technique of work, and relation to tools, in way of behavior in the work place, in stories, and beliefs (Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 107).

These characteristic structures of the occupational community, with a strong sense of solidarity embodied in the working

tradition provided workers with self-reliance and a collective identity which served as the basis for collective mobilization.

Specific working conditions such as homogeneity, professional hierarchy, and the treatment of workers by the management also influenced worker solidarity. However, declining wages and status of miners combined with the national wealth accounts for discontent among miners (Meyer, 1961, pp. 4-5).

Cultural homogeneity had an important impact on the strength of the occupational community. Although the occupational community is generally characterized by cultural fragmentation due to a constant influx of miners from diverse geographical areas (Asher, 1982, pp. 326), the Wieliczka miners were distinguished by its high level of homogeneity.

Most of the miners originated in Wieliczka and surrounding areas. Until 1920, the number of rural workers systematically grew. By the 1930s, their dominance was no longer meaningful. A very small percentage of miners originated in other parts of Poland or other parts of the region. The majority of miners were Polish citizens with only a small percentage from Austria and Hungary.

The homogeneity of miners was also created by the regulation of the salt mine. During the Austrian regime, the hiring priorities were to have local workers and the sons of

miners first. After World War I, the mine hired workers exclusively from Wieliczka and its closest surroundings (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 86-92; Archiwum Zup Krakowskich, hereafter AZK).

The miners in the Wieliczka salt mine were divided into occupational categories based on the types of jobs they performed. Divisions between miners were very rigid; they differed with regard to qualifications, authority, and form and amount of pay. The conditions of their work were regulated by numerous legislations. The most important legislation was enacted in 1884. According to this legislation, a miner's work day could not exceed 12 hours. However, in the state salt mines, this was enacted only with regard to "surface" workers but not underground miners. Those miners had a 8 hour workday. Later legislation in 1919 (DZV.R.P.Nr.2) introduced a uniform work day (8 hours) for all workers employed in the mines.

Workers were divided into two categories: permanent and temporary. Permanent workers were employed in production, temporaries were used as helpers. The highest prestige was connected with two categories of permanent workers, zelaznik (miner who hew salt) and rzemieslnik (craftsman). The next place in the occupational hierarchy was for transport workers, with lowest prestige assigned to temporary workers.

Miners who were permanently employed had not only higher status, but also higher earnings, old age provisions, and greater possibilities for promotion. However, both types of workers had free medical care and pensions in case of an accident.

Until 1918, stability of employment was the rule. But after 1918, this changed when only miners for temporary positions were hired. The average period of work ranged from 10.5 in 1903 to 11.7 hours per day in 1909. For retiring miners, the average length of work was 22 years in 1902 and 28 years in 1908 (Statistische Mitteilungen, 1912). There are no data from later periods regarding these issues.

Systems and amounts of pay and benefits were based on state legislation and on specific rules governing the local salt mine. Some rules and benefits were common for all workers, others pertained only to miners, while others pertained only to salt miners. There were also special rules and regulations specific to the region of the Wieliczka salt mine.

The benefits provided by the mine included health care, setting miner standard qualifications, and general education. These benefits had a long tradition. In part, they were enacted because of the economic interests of the mine, that is, their function was to sustain a constant influx of workers (this was mainly practiced during the Austrian regime). They

also were enacted for fear of radical movements and industrial conflicts. However if the interests of miners and the mine were in conflict, the mine administration would turn against the workers and defend its own interests. As a result, the benefits of workers were formed out of a constant struggle with the government of a capitalist country, and their character determined by the arrangement of power between both sides. Miners were compelled to struggle by a real material situation, growing needs, and a developing class consciousness (This will be discuss in more detail in the next paper).

Permanent workers were divided into systematized and nonsystematized groups. Systematization was a normative determination of workers in specific categories. Only two-thirds of all permanent miners were systematized; all temporary workers were nonsystematized. Systematized miners were divided into four groups. Within each group, there existed three levels of pay. Nonsystematized miners did not have the possibility of promotion to higher levels of pay (AZK, Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 110-113). The pay was also divided into two systems, day pay and contract pay. The contract pay became more important at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was the result of a tendency to increase the efficiency of work and the difficulties involved with controlling miners' work (AZK).

The management of the mine was interested in efficiency, and relations with workers were such that managers were able to realize their economic objectives. Management tried to uphold existing social relations by enforcing traditional values, and maintaining a rigid social distance between miners and nonmanual workers. Additionally, even in the twentieth century, management tried to coerce miners to continue traditional religious beliefs and practices, and respect the authority of the church. Religiosity ensured the miners' submission to the existing political system, since nonbelievers were seen as dangerous to the state (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 239-241).

The strength of the mining community relied on the intensity of bonds that held workers together. Strong ties were created by the specifics of the occupational community, that is, harsh working conditions, constant danger, and isolation. Such factors as homogeneity, professional hierarchy, and miner--manager relations also affected the solidarity of workers. The structural characteristics of the mining community provided miners with collective identity which served as the basis for collective mobilization.

### THE SALT MARKET ECONOMY

The salt mine generally employed permanent workers and subsequently was less exposed to fluctuations in the labor market. Also, the economic position of miners was conditioned by wages and benefits obtained from the employer.

The salt mines in Galicia were the most important source of revenue for the state. Profit from salt monopoly in a total state profit ranged from 38 percent in 1880 to 36.5 percent in 1913. Among Austrian industries, salt work played an imperative role since it was the second largest industry. The financial value of extracted salt amounted to one third of the financial value of the entire Austrian mining industry. In addition, salt was one of the main (beside oil and wood) exported goods from Galicia (*Roczmik Statystiki Gialicji, 1989-1891*) (*Podrecznik Statystyki Galicji, 1913*).

When Poland gained independence after World War I, the salt economy was subject to many changes. The former Galicia salt mines were consolidated with salt mines in other parts of Poland. In the first years after the War, there were 15 functioning mines in Poland; 12 of these including the Wieliczka salt mine, became state property (*Dziwik, 1989, p. 305*).

During the first years after the War, the legislation pertaining to salt mines did not change. The first new

legislation was enacted in 1924 (DZV.R.P. 1924 Nr. 117), and it introduced the monopoly of salt sale. In 1930 unified legislation affecting the mining industry was enacted. The legislation classified salt as a mineral, and its mining was allowed only by the Salt Monopoly, which also had a full monopoly on its sale (AZK).

In 1919, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce had direct control over the salt mines. In 1920, the Headquarters of the State Mining and Metallurgy was established, and took control over the salt mines in the region (formerly Galicia). This institution managed the salt mines until 1925, at which time the Headquarters of the State Salt Mines was created. In 1932, the mines went under the control of the Ministry of Finance.

The objective of the state was to insure constant revenue. To accomplish this, it tried to increase both the efficiency of the mines and the rates of surplus value. The period of the Second Republic is characterized by a tremendous increase in salt extraction (Table 1). The other way of securing profit was to reorganize the hiring system.

The salt mine in Wieliczka was the state's biggest and most profitable mine. Since it operated under state monopoly, the Austrian state did not take much interest in the production of salt until shortly before World War I, when measures were introduced that attempted to intensify

production. It was due to the fact that salt production was bringing continuous profit. During the Second Republic, more new tactics were employed to lower the cost of production. Since the mine was property of the state, it was the central management that decided upon the level of production.

The Austrian state determined the level of production each year, and this depended upon specific conditions of the market. However, during the Second Republic, levels of

Table 1. Sodic and potassic salt extraction during the period of the Second Republic in thousands of tons<sup>a</sup>

Year	Sodic salt extraction	Potassic salt extraction
1920	263	10
1925	430	179
1930	534	306
1935	515	384
1938	643	567

<sup>a</sup>Rocznik Statystyki Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Maly Rocznik Statystyczny.

production were changed as often as the conditions of the market changed, sometimes as often as each month (Dziwik, 1989, pp. 250-252, 296-298, 319-324) (Table 2).

The salt mine industry was very lucrative, and the salt mine in Wieliczka was the most profitable of the mines. The data from 1921 shows that the profit of the Wieliczka mine was 301470392 while all the salt mines in the State (including the

Wieliczka mine) had a total profit of 403882274 (Polish marks) (AZS).

The size of the labor force was dictated by the market. From 1900 until 1920, there was a steady growth in the labor force. After 1925, labor steadily declined. By the outbreak of World War II the size of the labor force was approximately half the size of 1920 (Table 3).

Table 2. Production of salt in Austria and Poland from 1900 to 1939, in tons

	Salt production	Poland year	Salt production
1900	81920	1920	172711 <sup>a</sup>
1905	88609	1925	93000
1910	83034	1930	140993
1913	85660	1938	141200

<sup>a</sup>Includes also salt-working.

The changes in political boundaries and resultant changes in the market had a profound impact on miners. Under Austrian rule, salt production remained at the same general level while employment gradually increased. But this changed when the Second Republic regained ownership of the mine. Beginning in 1925, the miners were faced with a

constantly changing market economy and, subsequently, with adjustments to changing levels of production and reductions of the labor force. The constantly changing salt market and a continual thread of unemployment compelled miners to defensive collective bargaining to attain job security.

Table 3. Size of labor force in Wieliczka salt mine from 1900 to 1939<sup>a</sup>

Year	Labor force size	Year	Labor force size	Year	Labor force size
1900	963	1913	1597	1930	1533
1905	1256	1920	2550	1935	1332
1910	1471	1925	1764	1938	1306

<sup>a</sup>Spis Robotnikow Zupy AZS 1 i 131,316,269,312.

**PARTIES AND LABOR MOVEMENTS**

The formation of political parties towards the end of the 19th century furthered the development of the labor movement. The most influential in this regard was the party of the social democrats, the Polish Socialist Party. Since its formation, the Polish Socialist Party, which represented the working class' struggling for liberation from capitalism, tried to overthrow the existing political system and obtain power for workers (Gross, 1945, pp. 115-116).

The party was going to abolish exploitation, destroy the division of society into classes, to remove all economic and political inequalities, and end wastefulness and anarchy of capitalism... They were going to build society based on cooperation to rationally orient energies and resources toward satisfaction of human needs, to create social conditions for an unlimited development of the personality. Rationality, justice, and freedom were the guiding goals of the social democratic movement (Przeworski, 1980).

The Polish Socialist Party (hereafter PPS) became a member of the Second International. The Polish trade unions (which were created by the party) joined the International Trade Union Organization (Gross, 1945, p. 117).

In Galicia, the Austrian part of Poland, the socialist movement assumed a mass character, much like Western Europe even though it was connected with the PPS in the Russian occupied part of Poland. PPS was the only major workers' party in the Austrian part of Poland where the party was not

split (Gross, 1945, pp. 119-121). The workers organizations in Galicia developed more fully than in other parts of Poland, and a strong trade union movement arose (Buszko, 1989).

In 1897, the Polish socialists entered the electoral struggle for the first time and won a number of parliamentary mandates. Thus, for the first time, PPS entered parliament. Following the victory, the party began to organize trade unions, establish workers' centers, and form workers' cooperatives. As a result of intensive activities, the Galician socialist movement became a powerful political factor in the state (Gross, 1945, p. 145).

World War I interrupted the political struggle in Galicia. Abrogation of the Austrian regime and the gaining of independence by the Galician part of Poland in 1918 was perceived by many workers, particularly those under the PPS influence, as the coming change of social and economic conditions though the democratization of social and political relations. The PPS was perceived as the main vehicle to bring such change. Galicia, however, was never involved in the struggle for power between the most revolutionary workers who intended to take over the government, and the bourgeois political power which preferred to build a Polish bourgeois republic. It was due to the fact that Galician workers were under PPS which occupied a dominant position in the workers' movement in the area (Pilch, 1987, pp. 53, 55).

Following the war, PPS resumed full political activity in the region. Although the program of PPS did not omit the possibility of revolution to achieve basic social changes, revolution was to be social, i.e., evolutionary social rebuilding, the parliamentary way (Dziewik, 1989, pp. 342-343).

The more reforms, the faster they are introduced, the nearer the social revolution, the sooner the socialist ship would sail into the new world. And even when times are not auspicious for new steps to be made, even when political or economic circumstances require that reforms be postponed, eventually each new reform would build the past accomplishments (Przeworski, 1980, p. 46).

The PPS hoped to achieve a large number of mandates in parliament elections for the realization of its political, social, and economic programs. But the party never won a sufficient number of votes. Although defeated, PPS remained the most important workers party (Pilch, 1987, p. 55).

No documentation is available on the specific date of the formation of the PPS division among Wieliczka' miners. The earliest surviving documents describe well organized activities of the PPS in Wieliczka at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1907, PPS in Wieliczka was involved in a struggle over suffrage reforms. The division of PPS in Wieliczka developed propaganda activity, with the purpose of raising the level of education and class indoctrination of all these miners who complied with management. Other types of

activities involved organizing of rallies and meetings with the most prominent party members. During these meetings the conditions of the working class were emphasized, and the effects of PPS activities in other centers were presented. They also formulated postulates regarding the development of professional and political organizations (Naprzod, 1907, 1908, AZK,

The significant achievement of the socialist movement in Wieliczka was the tightening of cooperation with miners in all of the Galician salt mines. PPS started to organize conventions which included all socialistic salt mines in Galicia. The first such convention was in 1909 which was presided over by miners from Wieliczka (Naprzod, 1909).

Popularity of the PPS party grew among Wieliczka miners; they believed that through the party they could achieve their goals. Following the War, socialist sentiment among miners was very strong. The miners believed that the party would be able to reform the existing capitalist system with the result that the economic and political situation of miners would also change (Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 270).

The second party which influenced the workers' movement in Wieliczka, was the Christian Democratic Party. The party was established at the end of the nineteenth century. Its ideological basis was Pope Leo XIII's encyclical "Rerum Novarum" established in 1891. Influence of the party spread

among artisans and small traders who tended to throw their support to the bourgeois government and their parties, rather than the workers. However, a faction of workers supported the party. The weak development of the party was in part due to its internally contradictory assumptions. This movement did not exclude strikes, but without church support, included a very narrow path for action (Pilch, 1987, p. 99).

The Catholic spheres with small exceptions, treat the organization indifferently, or negatively. They cannot understand that the struggle for a better tomorrow of workers can be based on Christian-national norms, but they think that every wage movement or strike is negative in itself and incompatible with holy beliefs (Robotnik Polski, 1913).

Galicia (the part of Poland occupied by Austria) was a cradle of the trade union movements. Union movements have started in 1870s. Unions in Galicia had many features of the old corporations, which were clearly visible in the craft character of some unions. However, socialism and the Social Democratic Party contributed greatly to the development of the trade union movement.

The trade unions were organized on an industrial basis. Their formation allowed them to undertake both economic and political campaigns. The miners' unions, which were the largest and the best organized, incorporated coal miners, salt miners, and oil miners (Gross, 1945, pp. 146-147).

Beginning the twentieth century, Galicia had powerful trade organizations of a purely labor character. Unions

representing miners, railworkers, and municipal workers became powerful supporters of the socialist movement. In 1902, Congress unified the whole Galician union movement (Gross, 1945, p. 145).

The first mining union, called the Mining Association, was founded in 1896 and available for all miners in the district. Soon after, the salt miners were excluded from this union and, in 1906, came under the Miners Association for Galicia Salt Mines. Later these associations were replaced by the miners's union founded by PPS (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 256-260; Naprzod, 1906).

A main focus of the union before World War I included petitions which were delivered to the Ministry of Finance in Vienna, asking for state intervention to improve the harsh working conditions. The petitions called for changes in wages, work hours, retirement pensions, and health insurance. Workers also demanded increases in coal allowances, more housing, and eight hour work days (Naprzod 1909, AZS).

After the formation of an independent Poland in 1918 and the enactment of new legislation on freedom of association and union activity in 1919, the labor movement flourished. The former Galicia, which included the Wieliczka mine, remained under the rule of Austrian legislation (from 1867) regarding associations. This circumstance, however, did not

prevent Wieliczka's miners from establishing new union organizations.

In the Wieliczka salt mine a strong union movement developed in which crystallized three various orientations: a class union which was established and supervised by the Social Democratic Party; a christian union which was connected with the Christian Democratic Party; and a nationalistic-solidaristic union which was established and supported by the right wing bourgeois party. Since unions were established and supervised by different parties, they adopted different ideological and tactical approaches. The pro-state nationalistic-solidaristic union was created in 1931 in order to disorganize and diminish the importance of the socialistic class union which was the most powerful of the orientations in the Wieliczka mine (AZK, Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 277; Pilch, 1987, p. 296; Dziwik, 1988, p. 344).

The most active role in creating the labor unions and spreading the socialist ideology was played by the Social Democratic Party, which had strong support of the miners.

The salt miners' union, which remained under PPS, initiated impressive activities. It focused on the mining economy on which the miners' standard of living depended. The union disapproved of closing mines and salt-works. Fearing the competition from other salt miners, the union demanded extension of the production monopoly on all salt mines in

Poland. It also proposed an extension of the salt market and reduction in the bureaucracy of the Salt Mines Headquarters (Naprzod, 1923, 1934; Gornik, 1924, 1930, 1934, 1935; AZK).

Goals of the union were sought through negotiations with both the state officials and management of the local mine. In most cases the bargaining was related to the specific conditions of the miners, including medical care, old age provisions, and specific commissions. The most frequent negotiations concerned the pay increases and temporary relief through loans or aid. The union also demanded changes or enactment of new statutes regarding accidents and employment. In time, a variety of political issues were added to the agenda. Collective bargaining during the first decades of the twentieth century was common and miners' interests were always represented through their union (Naprzod, 1924, 1932, 1936; Gornik, 1924, 1930, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1939; AZK). The strong position of the union was at times shadowed by cleavages with the Christian Union. The activities of the Christian Union were mainly addressed against the class union and its achievements, such as May celebration, the day devoted to honoring workers and their achievements.

The actions of the union took various forms. The most conventional forms of the struggle were strikes. Strikes which occur prior to World War I included the wave of strikes in 1917. These were economic strikes where workers demanded

increased wages and changes in their contract. One year later the strike of 1918 had not only an economic, but also a political character.

Short duration strikes took place in 1920, 1922, and 1923. These strikes were extended to most of the country and were symptomatic of dissatisfaction both with the economic situation in the market and with the government. The last two strikes in the decade were in 1924 and 1926. The last strike during the Second Republic occurred in 1936 (AZK; Naprzod, 1922-1924, 1936; Gornik, 1936).

Other types of organized action included demonstrations, rallies, and public meetings. A distinct form of collective action of the miners was less concerned with their own interests; but more attention was focused on building solidarity with workers from other industrial centers or with peasants. This type of collective action became most important in times of pronounced socialism in the salt mine (Dobrowolska, 1965. p. 272).

Since their formation, unions contended with almost continuous state repression which appeared in various forms. Repression included attempts by the state to diminish the unity of the miners' interests in their intrinsic class strength (Therborn, 1983). As an example, a pro state union (ZZZ) was established in 1931. Organizers underscored the unions' apolitical character and emphasized interest only in

economic and educational goals. Essentially, their union was controlled and managed by salt mine managers, and its main goal was to demobilize the socialistic union.

Miners were pressured to joined the company union. Those who opposed were unable to get employment in the mine, or could not obtain a promotion, or higher wages (AZK).

The government attempted to decrease the efficacy of collective actions among miners. The local police force was used to suppress free speech of strikers and organizers, break strikes, and suppress the movement with force. The most tragic consequence of this repression occurred during the strike of 1923, when eight miners were killed in a struggle with the police (Naprzod, 1923; AZK; Pilch, 1987, pp. 173, 190). Despite the repression the socialist union managed to reconstitute itself, after a brief period of stagnation.

In addition to the trade union under the dominance of PPS, there was also a union established by the Christian Democratic Party. This union, however, as its founder, never played an important role in the trade union movement.

The union created by the Christian Democratic Party was of minimal importance in the Wieliczka salt mine. In fact, its membership amounted to only 25 miners. The main activities of the union were the submission of petitions to the mine authority regarding wage changes and fierce attacks

on the class union and the workers who belonged to PPS. Due to the lack of support, the union vanished in the late 1920s.

### CONCLUSION

The formation and development of the labor movement in the Wieliczka salt mine during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been reviewed. Its formation was related to the working miners' community. The characteristics of the miners' occupation (harsh working conditions, constant danger as well as the homogeneity, professional hierarchy, systems of pay, and miner-manager relations created strong ties among miners which, in turn, help to establish the basis for collective mobilization. The specifics of the miners' community served as prerequisites in the formation of strong worker organizations, as well as factors which aided in development of the union.

The movement also was influenced by the conditions of the salt market. Under the Austrian regime, salt production remained at the same level while employment steadily increased. With the take-over of the mine by the Second Republic, miners were faced with constantly changing market conditions and labor force reduction which had consequences on the level and quantity of collective bargaining.

The political parties which operated in the region served as the genesis of the miners' unions. The Social Democratic Party was the most influential party among miners, and was the founder and firm supporter of the most significant

miners' union. Two other unions established in the mine were of marginal importance. The Christian union, due to limited support by miners, ceased to exist in the late 1920s. The nationalistic-solidaristic union which was created by the state to disorganize the class movement in the mine lost its significance in the late 1930s.

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**PAPER 2. WIELICZKA MINERS AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS**

**INTRODUCTION**

Recent studies trace the development of class consciousness to the working class community culture. Class consciousness is seen as emerging from communal traditions, values, and currents of thoughts which shape responses to changing forms of exploitation (Nelson, 1984; Kaplan, 1981). But such a model proves to be of limited use in the study of class consciousness, since it posit that workers are enclosed in their communities. Relying only on their own traditions and values derived from past experience, workers are capable only of developing a limited parochial type of consciousness. Such a consciousness, while leading perhaps to local challenges of unjust conditions, does not imply a revolutionary type of consciousness which leads to a total transformation of society.

Such a model as the foregoing could be justifiably supplemented by a Marxist explanation of class consciousness. Marxists contend that the growth of consciousness is embodied in workers' professional organizations (i.e., trade unions), which are used as a weapon in their struggle against exploitation. Furthermore, party organization helps to promote the development of consciousness by enabling workers to understand the concepts and ideas which have contributed to

their oppression and by encouraging workers to resist the conditions that oppress them.

The working class consciousness generated by the trade unions was regarded by Marxists as limited, for reasons delineated below. Revolutionary consciousness, which leads in effect to a total transformation of society, could be brought to workers by intellectuals and the progressive segment of the bourgeoisie. Class consciousness can be also enhanced through large-scale mobilizing workers in struggle. The radicalizing potential of industrial militancy, then, is embodied in a wave of strikes. Numerous instances of workers strikes, mobilization, and state repression thus combine to produce an upsurge of class consciousness.

This paper examines the development of class consciousness of miners in Wieliczka, one of the oldest industrial settlements in Poland during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

#### SELECTION OF FRAMEWORK

The predominant approach to the study of workers' consciousness is embodied in Marxist theorists on class consciousness. Studies adopting their approach assert that class consciousness leads to the radicalization of working class individuals (Cobas, 1977). Yet some of the more recent studies place the origin of the class consciousness in the working-class culture (Thompson, 1966; Hobsbawm, 1968; Jones, 1979; Kapplan, 1981). These studies demonstrate that consciousness is the expression of communal traditions altered in response to capitalist development and political conflict. The cultural tradition, with its own institutions, enables workers to mobilize not only against capitalism but in favor of an alternative society.

When cultural distinctiveness coincides with class identity, it serves to reinforce both class identity and the potential for mobilization. The basic ingredients for class consciousness are sought through small scale, daily experiences of class members along with socioeconomic conditions (Scott, 1977).

Studies which place the development of class consciousness in working class culture assume that workers are "self-activating" and capable of constructing their own "diagnosis and remedies for the ills that afflicted them"

(Thompson, 1966). It is questionable, however, to assume that a group of workers in total isolation and without the intellectual contributions and inspirations of new ideas are capable of developing a revolutionary consciousness. It is more probable that a close-knit community separated from novel ideas will only be able to develop a parochial form of consciousness, that is, an awareness that may generate challenges to existing local injustice but unable by itself to form socialistic awareness leading to the transformation of society (Zelnik, 1982; Kapplan, 1981).

Evidence suggests that the working class tends to ally with intellectuals and progressive segments of the bourgeoisie who influence workers and redirect their parochial experiences into a class-based vision of the future (Marks, 1989; Martin 1989; Nolan and Sabel, 1982). It is then proposed that the working class consciousness which arises in the working class culture and is an expression of communal traditions is historically characteristic of "pre-modern" labor movements. These movements lack a professional labor organization and relationships with political parties. Marxists models provide a much fuller understanding of the development of working class consciousness than those which ignore the distinction between the various kinds of consciousness.

Marxist models are concerned with two issues, namely, the conditions under which workers would become politically

conscious and the role that trade unions would play in the transformation of society (Portes, 1971). Marx was mainly concerned with the circumstances of social and political life under capitalism. In other words, he was concerned with the conditions for a transformation of society which were to be found not only in objective economic conditions, but also through the consciousness of the actors (Ollman, 1972; Marx, 1961; Bottomore, 1964).

The conditions of life, experiences at work, and common struggles are expected to bring workers to a consciousness of their state and to a knowledge of what must be done to transform it. "Recognition of the working class of the structural determinants of its situation and correct identification of the classes are major factors promoting the political struggle of workers" (Portes, 1971).

Becoming class conscious is grounded in the recognition of being a part of a group whose members have the same grievances and desires, and an awareness of the group's appropriate life conditions. Class consciousness also includes a spirit of devotion and loyalty to an organization (Ollman, 1972).

Trade unions operated as centers of resistance against the encroachments of capital, and served as the organization's representative of the working class. They served as a weapon in the struggle against exploitation and, as such, became the

focal point in tension between the two social classes, capital and labor (Kelly, 1988; MacKenzie, 1966; Engels, 1978).

The capitalist mode of production would conjure into being a working class which, in turn, would organize itself into trade unions and political parties (Kelly, 1989). Unions have the task of awakening the agents of an educative process within the working class. Through common experience gained by participating in the unions, workers became aware of their common interests (MacKenzie, 1966; Engels, 1978).

In the short run, common interests served as a general resource which increases working class people's abilities to fulfill needs, things such as money, power, better working conditions, etc. In the long run, interests of the working class serves to abolish an exploitative situation, through transformation of society (Ollman, 1972). From demands for a just wage would come a more sharply focused demand for the abolition of the wage system.

The more the factory system has taken possession of the branch of industry, the more the working--men employed in it participate in the labor movement; the sharper the opposition between working-men and capitalists, the clearer the proletarian consciousness in the working men... But, in general, all the workers employed in manufacture are won for one form or other of resistance to capital and bourgeoisie; and all are united upon this point that they, as working men... form a separate class, with separate interests and principles, with a separate way of looking at things in contrast with that of all property owners (Marx, Engels, 1990).

Unless trade unions are involved in actions oriented toward the transformation of society, the workers' trade union struggle remains within the parameters of bourgeois society. This is due to the fact that trade unions are limited to the struggle for wages, and the struggle to change working conditions, i.e., the effort to regulate capitalist exploitation must become defensive, since bourgeois social reforms and slow improvements in the situation of working class life are plausible only within the boundaries drawn by capitalist production (Kitschelt and Wiesenthal, 1979; Trotsky, 1978).

Trade union and parliamentary struggles have a function in this transformation, since they fulfill requirements for overcoming the limitations inherent in the capitalist system. Trade unions promote the economic contradictions within the relations of production which, in turn, intensifies the conflict of interest between the classes and promotes the working class belief that the simple trade union struggle cannot change their situation. The abolition of the existing exploitative system is inevitable (Kelly, 1989).

Lenin (1943) pointed out that:

The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc.

Trade union consciousness was not a deviation from the path of transformatory development, it was the general path taken by the working class. Trade union ideology did not embody or promote socialist ideology, since ideology is the world view of a social class that expresses its fundamental economic and political interests and, according to Marxism, there are only two classes, i.e., bourgeoisie and proletariat. The latter's ideology is revolutionary socialism, and the fact that the ideology and consciousness of trade unions depart from that ideology means, in effect, that workers are ideologically enslaved by the bourgeoisie. But this fact did not diminish the importance of the trade unions. As such, trade unions and trade union politics promoted only a form of class consciousness, but not the revolutionary class consciousness itself (Kelly, 1988).

Since the capitalists are not likely to consent to many worker demands, the workers will not fail to see that their interests lie elsewhere, that is, in the abolition of the system. Furthermore, minor benefits which workers might be able to extract from capitalists temporarily during periods of economic expansion are likely to be lost in periods of depression. Marx also perceived that the worsening conditions of the working class would become the essential condition for awakening the very awareness of class (Ollman, 1972; Bottomore, 1964; Elster, 1985).

The relative worsening of economic conditions, however, is not adequate for the process of becoming class conscious. Declining living conditions, relative to achieved standards or to other classes, only indicates that a specific situation needs to be changed (Kitschelt and Wiesenthal, 1972).

Since the working class's organizations, i.e., trade unions, are mainly engaged only in economic struggle of a limited reformist type, leading, in effect, to a limited development of consciousness, other conditions are necessary to assist workers in developing class consciousness (Wolpe, 1970).

Due to the limited focus of the working class intellectuals tend to play an immense role in shaping working class consciousness. Lenin claimed that the working class is only able to develop trade union consciousness, and needs help from without to develop true socialism

The economic struggle merely brings the workers "up against questions concerning the attitude of the government towards the working class. Consequently, however much we may try to "give the economic struggle itself a political character," we shall be able to develop the political consciousness of the workers (to the degree of Social-Democratic consciousness) by confining ourselves to the economic struggle, for the limits of this task are too narrow... The workers can acquire class political consciousness only from without, that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships between all classes and the state and

the government--the sphere of the interrelations between all classes (Lenin, 1943).

The task of the party organization is to promote leaders who are able to provide workers with theoretical knowledge, i.e., ideas and concepts relevant to their situation. This is the precondition for the development of full class consciousness. Furthermore, class consciousness can be brought to workers through propaganda, which should consist of not only the idea that the workers are oppressed, but also be addressed to them in the course of their confrontation with their objective conditions. The determining method of bringing class consciousness to workers is through agitation "that is, political explanation given not in abstract forms, but obtained in living examples actually experienced" (Wolpe, 1970).

From classical Marxism, one can discern a distinct attempt to construct a strategy through which trade unions and political parties would enhance the class consciousness of workers (Kelly, 1989). This strategy emphasizes mobilization of workers in struggle. However, many individual strikes have little impact on consciousness, as they are limited affairs of short duration fought over local, economic issues. But a wave of strikes with a high level of worker mobilization requires the state to intervene in an attempt to restore law and order and protect capitalist profits against the encroachments of

labor militancy. Repression on the part of the state against state workers more often polarizes society into two major classes, and elevates questions of class identity, interests, and power to the center of the political stage. Under such conditions, organized labor has the opportunity to effect a major shift in the balance of power against capital.

The radicalizing potential of industrial militancy is related to those historical periods marked by strike waves that trigger a specific set of reactions by employers and the capitalist state (Kelly, 1989). Numerous instances of workers' mobilization, strikes, and state repression helps produce an upsurge of political class consciousness among workers, despite the fact that most strikes are simply about wage disputes.

Not every strike, however, can radicalize workers, because economic militancy impacts on political class consciousness. The scale of mobilization and ruling-class reaction determines the impact of strikes on political class consciousness, but not on the initial demands of the strikers. A wave of purely economic strikes also can have an impact on workers' consciousness (Kelly, 1989).

### MINERS AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Workers in traditional communities were supposed to have strong feelings of collective solidarity (Hill, 1981). Their work culture was based on close relations and shared experiences and manifested itself in close attachments with work groups. These groups formed a base for wider community and class loyalties. Collectivism was solidaristic, and the unity of the industrial and political wings of the labor movement rejected bourgeois individualism. Through a class conscious social imagery, society was divided into two antagonistic classes.

The salt mine workers of Wieliczka developed a strong bond within their working community. They created a strong solidarity group which was opposed to the mine administration. One of the factors which influenced their strong sense of solidarity was their work; miners were divided into various crews which were often changed. As a result of these changes, the integrative processes encompassed all miners of a given category and caused the dissolution of any differences with regard to age, ideology, or place of origin (Dziwik, 1988, pp. 342-343; Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 239, 296, 302).

The specific character of work in the mine, reflected in the constant great danger, combined with distinct mine customs created a particular kind of unity among workers. Miners'

solidarity was also influenced by their similar social situation and the wide social gap between miners and the administrators of the mine. The miners saw themselves as the exploited and the harmed stratum of the social system (Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 296).

The feeling of unity was also created as miners received the same services, i.e., medical care, provisions, loans, aid, etc. It was also reinforced by a similar situation in private life, similar material situations, and similar social standing in the society (Archiwum Zup Krakowskich, hereafter AZK; Dobrowolska, 1965, 296).

During the first part of the nineteenth century, Wieliczka was a classic case of intense class struggle and well-developed class-consciousness. The struggle was to abolish the paternalistic aspects of the miners' society and improve the economic situation of the miners.

The relationship between management and miners was shaped by the same principles governing the relationship between a feudal owner and serfs. The miners were punished by public whipping for any delinquent act, such as stealing salt. Miners were not allowed to have places of residence or get married without the permission of management. Restrictions of the miners' freedom is cited in a 1839 statute of the mine: "Between administration and miners, relations do not exist, except those particular relations noted in other countries of

the Austro-Hungarian Empire, namely those between a master and slave" (AZK; Dziwik, 1988, p. 284).

Although the Austrian government provided some care for miners, during the first half of the nineteenth century, miners faced extremely hard times; salaries and pensions were small and because of a constantly rising cost of living, diminished the value of their holdings. During this period, many miners became part-time beggars. Some tried to sell self produced salt souvenirs. The news about the extreme poverty among the Wieliczka miners was known not only in the country but also abroad (Inwentarz t. III).

The pervasive poverty and lack of personal freedom of the miners, the wealth of the administration of the mine, and increased salt production stirred the miners' consciousness. The first phase of conflict came with the strike of 1811. The workers struck for three days during which they chose representatives to present their demands. Most of the demands were granted and the miners were not punished for the strike. The victory of strike brought class solidarity and encouraged workers to engage in further struggles (Inventarz t.II).

The second strike occurred in 1817. The miners broke into the administration building of the mine and demanded wage changes. The strike ended in a total fiasco and the miners were attacked by the army. The leaders of the strike were barred from work in the mine (Inventarz t.II).

Aided and influenced by revolutionary intellectuals, the miners' consciousness developed around the revolutionary ideology of 1846. The miners participated in one of the most progressive movements of the time, the Cracow Revolution. The upheaval in the mine was so strong that the Austrian government proposed raising wages for fear of new disturbances (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 57-58; Gaweda, pp. 208-209, 1990). Workers hoped that the victory of the revolution would bring not only national independence and a new and just society, but also the abolition of class society.

The new phase in the development of class consciousness emerged with the creation of the Social Democratic Party of Austria. It provided an impetus to the development of new political organizations in all Austrian provinces. The Galician Social Democratic Party in which Wieliczka was included, was founded in 1892.

The new party adopted a program based on general principles of revolutionary Marxism. The founding of a socialistic organization in Galicia had important implications for the development of the labor movement since it gave the movement its organizational forms. The party became a major force in the Wieliczka mine; it provided miners with a number of cadres which were in tune with the sentiment and aspirations of miners (Buszko, 1958).

The cadres were created by the miners themselves who had authority in the mining community. These organizers were usually descended from very poor mining or peasant families, which made them more aware of the unjust and coercive system. Their own lives served as the main prerequisite for their political activity, but their own interests mirrored the interests of all workers (Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 309).

Popular class consciousness undoubtedly arose in relation to the party. However, further development of party ideology thwarted rather than developed political consciousness among miners. The party ideology was increasingly influenced by reformistic prerogatives because the socio-political Galician system was diluted with many feudal anachronisms which liberal bourgeois society was unable to abolish (Buszko, 1958).

The labor movement, however, saw the necessity of struggle for democratic reforms, i.e., making changes in society for the betterment of conditions of the working class. The realization of such reforms would allow the working class to seize power.

Not being deluded by the so-called value of parliamentarism, which is a form of the contemporary ruling class [the labor movement] will aim to universal, equal, and direct election to all representative bodies as one of the most important means of agitation and organization (Naprzod, 1892).

Subsequently, the party tried to convince the miners that under the current political situation, universal elections

"would provide workers with influence vis a vis state affairs and in defense of their interests" (Naprzod, 1892). This way the party idealized bourgeois democracy and impeded the process of the implantation of revolutionary consciousness (Buszko, 1958).

In 1897, the separate Polish Social Democratic Party was formed, and its members immediately commenced lively political activity. At the time the party was one of the main factors which awakened the political consciousness of workers through educating them in the socialist spirit i.e., formation of educational organizations and encouragement to read the party press. However, the ideology of the party did not change. The party instituted reformist changes by which it attempted to raise the levels of worker education and class indoctrination. The party influenced miners' consciousness through the dissemination of socialist ideology through which miners gained an understanding of their situation. The growth of education in the miners' environment made it easier to diffuse a new movement (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 270, 274; Naprzod, 1987, 1903, 1907, 1908, 1912).

Following World War I, socialism became a very popular doctrine among Wieliczka miners. It was a progressive movement but far from revolutionary. The party had a very reserved position toward the miners' militancy. Due to the effects of the socialist movement, cooperation among all

Galician salt-mines was enacted. The miners felt a strong bond with other workers, which was expressed in collective action, i.e., the general strikes (Pilch, 1987, p. 163).

The party played an active role in the miners' union. A great majority of miners flocked into the union during the period of the Second Republic (1918-1939). The union's meetings were well attended. The miners' union was the largest in former Galicia.

The main activity of the union was related to the improvement of the miners working conditions and the increase in their wages. As Marx (1975) points out, "the struggle within the wage system is the union activity. However, Marx also postulated that unions should progress from 'skirmishes' within capitalism to the fight against the wage system itself. Marx saw this as the first step toward class consciousness.

The workers become conscious of their interests that transcend the system if they come into conflict with capital in perusing of their interests and when such conflict disclose the incompatibility of the workers' real interests. As a rule the unions will progress to the struggle against wage system when the workers become conscious of this incompatibility (Martin, 1978).

Even before workers are able to recognize their class interests, they are driven by their needs in ways which serve to satisfy these interests. Because planned action, based on a full appreciation of what those interests are, is probably the most effective way to proceed, it provides what is

possibly the greatest boost to becoming class conscious (Ollman, 1972, p. 6).

The role of the mining union was to win whatever was in the miners' interests or, as Ollman(1972) suggests, to get workers what they wanted. The major want of Wielicza's miners was the improvement of their economic situation. Consequently, the miners union engaged in well developed activity in this regard.

Specific goals of the union were connected with the then current situation of miners. For instance, following the war, miners opposed their inclusion into general health insurance programs since the miners' health insurance and health care program was much more beneficial. Miners also demanded the building of new apartments for miners, and the inclusion of a provision for years served in the army. Another demand included the reformation of the brotherhood of self-help organizations. But, most often the miners' union asked for wages, loans, and other kind of aid for miners. The union managed to make many gains during the post war period in wages during times of relative economic stability, and defended the miners' wage during times of depression (Naprzod, 1923, 1924, 1932; Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 271-273, 275, 277, 282-283; AZK).

With the political changes occurring in Poland the miners union got involved in political demands and protested

against the state's politics. When in 1929 it became obvious that the purpose of state politics was a fascist dictatorship, the union publicly condemned the state (Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 274).

On November 3, a mass conference of salt-miners took place. The focus of the conference were the recent political happenings which involved much conflict between the parliament and the government. The Polish miners do not humble themselves in the face of fascist dictatorship, but they are going to defend the freedom of the parliament by implementing even the extreme measures (Gornik, 1929).

In reality, however, the activity of the union consisted for the most part of submitting itself to the conciliatory politics of the Socialist Party.

The historic process of the working class struggle led to the incorporation of economic and political demands. The greater the scope and intensity of class-struggle, the more closely economic and political demands merged: wage and redistribution, working conditions and control, repressive laws and state power. It was in the whole complex of demands and in the struggles over time to win them--not in the one dimensional, immediate wants of individual workers--that class consciousness of the working class was expressed (Petras, 1978, p. 50).

As was pointed out in the previous section, classical Marxists claim that the consciousness raising effect of strikes cannot be predicted from their content. Economic

strikes produce only trade union consciousness and do not radicalize the workers. But, as has been pointed out above, large numbers of near strikes and of strikers, state repression, and revolutionary propaganda can combine dramatically raise class consciousness (Kelly, 1989, p. 94).

The year of 1917 witnessed a wave of strikes in the Wieliczka's salt mine. The strikes took place in May, June, October, and November of that year. During the May strike, 1,364 miners participated, in June 1392, and in October 1,537 miners, a figure representing the majority of miners employed at the time the salt mine. Miners demanded wage increases, changes in the work contract, and increases in commissions (Naprzod, 1917; Buszko, 1958).

In time, the strikes gained in strength and severity. More often miners got involved in various forms of rallies and street demonstrations. In 1918, a general strike spread throughout Galicia. The strike in Wieliczka itself lasted a month.

The worst paid of all workers in the country, put off by promises, were compelled to leave their jobs. The strike started last week in Wieliczka and has now extended to all Galician and even Alpine salt-mines (Naprzod, 1918).

The strikes which took place in the Wieliczka salt mine from 1920 to 1923 were short lived and had a generally demonstrative character. During this time, strike actions covered the whole country. It was a way of expressing

discontent regarding the bad conditions of the workers and discontent with the then current government (Buszko, 1989, p. 244).

These short lived strikes culminated in the memorable strike of November 1923. At this time, the miners proved that they were not lacking in revolutionary will. As Green (1977, pp. 73-74) pointed out, the strike of workers in the Southern region of Poland in 1923 can be perceived as a revolutionary crisis.

In the fall of 1923, the police stated that it was a period of total discontent in all social strata of society. The mood among the people was hostile toward the government. The strike started in Cracow during a rally in which 40,000 people participated. A general strike was proclaimed. On October 29, all the workers of Wieliczka organized a demonstrative strike which emphasized solidarity with all the working class in Poland. On November 5, the Wieliczka miners started a general strike. During the strike, miners organized demonstrations and rallies in which over two thousand people participated. According to the salt mine archives during the first day of the strike 514 miners participated, the second day 1,343, and the third day 1577. The total employment at the time amounted to 1,996 miners (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 272-273; Naprzod, 1923; Naprzod, 1924, AZK).

The strike was increasingly spontaneous, and the organizers (the union, PPS) of the strike were not able to control it. The miners spread the message that in Cracow the working class was victorious, so that there was a need for workers to seize power. On the last day of the strike, the police and the army attacked the miners. The PPS, concerned about widespread militancy of miners (since armed conflict was contrary to party policy), asked the miners to capitulate. The next day the miners returned to work (Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 273; Naprzod, 1923).

Although defeated and repressed, the miners were ready to start a strike again, had they perceived any chance of victory. The relation of workers to the leadership of the party and the union was not yet totally hostile, but miners treated both as mediators between workers and government officials, and not as the miners' representatives (Pilch, 1989, p. 197).

The fall strike was the first and the only military action of miners in the fight regarding economic and political class goals. It was the culminating stage of the miners' revolutionary attempts in achieving their goals.

The remaining strikes which took place between 1923 and 1939, were economic in nature and were organized in response to the enactment of reforms. The revolutionary fervor of 1923 never occurred again, due to the conciliatory politics of PPS

which continued to control the union (Dziwik, 1988, pp. 345-346).

The workers need to be educated in revolutionary strategy, and spontaneous movements can hardly fulfill this task. Theoretical knowledge is a precondition of the development of full class consciousness (Kelly, 1988, p. 34; Lenin, 1943). Theoretical knowledge as well as propaganda was brought to the Wieliczka miners in two ways. First, the PPS in Wieliczka developed propagandist activity. It was intended to increase the level of education of miners and increase their social consciousness. Secondly, PPS started a struggle for the improvement of the economic conditions of miners. Mainly PPS concentrated on reforms regarding suffrage vis a vis parliament, and local administrations (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 262-263).

The various forms of education which started in the late nineteenth century were continued after World War I. Educational activity was mainly inclined toward lectures, development of libraries, and the spread of increased reading habits.

It is already a year since local workers followed the way of an organized working class and created a cultural center, so that workers could extricate themselves from spiritual and material slavery. During the last year, 23 public meetings, 57 secret meetings, and the distribution of 7,000 copies of newspapers and 300 of PPS pamphlets as well as 14 lectures took place (Naprzod, 1909).

Again in 1908 Naprzod reported that the local party was concerned that miners get various cultural institutions and

develop versatile forms of organizations in order to deepen awareness of class consciousness.

Propaganda was also spread through popular publications such as "Naprzod," edited by PPS, and "Gornik," edited by the miners' union. Naprzod generally informed miners about the then current situation regarding labor movements, propaganda and agitation to transform society by way of reforms, as well as current economic and political happenings in the state and abroad.

"Gornik," the union paper, largely reflected the sentiments of the miners. That paper stressed both issues connected with the miners' conditions of life--their struggles to achieve goals and resolutions--as well as certain key propaganda slogans. The slogans that follow were often the order of the day. "From the handcuffs of coercion and the slavery of capitalism we are able to liberate ourselves," "always remember that you are a working class socialist," "our weapon is the socialistic paper, class union organization, that is human consciousness."

**CONCLUSION**

Some of the more recent studies have traced the development of workers' consciousness in the workers' environment (Kaplan, 1981; Nelson, 1984). The main notion of such studies is the idea that class consciousness grows from self-operating everyday activities of working class rooted in communal life (Kaplan, 1981). It also stressed that class consciousness leads the workers to action. However, this type of an explanation is too narrow, omitting as it does to account for the influence of intellectual progressive elements on the development of class consciousness. The type of consciousness developed in working class culture is characteristic of what could be called a "pre-modern" labor movement, one which lacks trade unions and contacts with political parties.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the specific miners community relations--such as miners' subservience to the management of the mine, lack of personal freedom, difficult living conditions, etc.,--stirred the miners consciousness and in effect led to industrial conflicts. However, since approximately the middle of the nineteenth century intellectuals have been instrumental in developing miners' consciousness.

Classical Marxists argued that full achievement of consciousness will lead to societal transformation and seizure of power of the state by the workers. They stressed the

necessity of workers organizations, which would help workers to become aware of oppressive social relations and which would be used as a weapon in class struggle.

However, Lenin envisioned that a struggle of an organization such as a trade union will only enable workers to be partially aware as a class that is achieving only trade union consciousness. The workers can become fully class aware only through a working class political party, through its propaganda and agitation.

Wieliczka represents an interesting case in point. On the one hand, its workers (with the aid of a party) transcended the situation of a mere fragmented, isolated, and localized rebellion while, on the other hand, they increasingly experienced the severe effects of a party grown so dominant that its major revolutionary promise was ultimately suppressed.

The commitment of organization that is a necessary part of class consciousness has always been characteristic of Wieliczka miners. Not only did the miners participate in achieving economic interests, they engaged in general strikes which enabled them to unite with other workers against the dominant class.

The mining strike of 1923 represented a highly developed form of class consciousness. Wieliczka miners became most militant and ready to overthrow the existing class system during this strike. In this brief historical moment,

miners' class consciousness reached its highest stage. But the incidents of 1923 also proved that as the miners actually strove for fundamental social change, their revolutionary spirit was stopped by the party.

While there is no doubt that the union and the socialist political party exerted an immense influence on Wieliczka miners' class consciousness, the ideology of the party tended to be reformist, thus thwarting rather than helping to develop the type of revolutionary consciousness represented in 1923.

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**PAPER 3. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND MINERS DEMANDS**

## INTRODUCTION

Trade unions are the product of an apparent paradox: They arise from antagonism with the economic order, yet at the same time contain this conflict within boundaries which preserve the basic features of this economic order (Hill, 1981). Trade unions are identified as reformist institutions which accept rather than dismiss capitalism despite the apparent conflict of interests that exist between workers and capitalists.

Trade unions represent a challenge to the structure of power within the political economy of capitalism. The economic objectives of the trade unions conflict with the capitalist's desire to minimize the cost of production (Hyman and Fryer, 1978). Labor market conditions, whether unemployment is high or low, influence the strength of the union's countervailing power (Hill, 1981).

In periods of heavy unemployment, the ability of workers to influence the terms and conditions of their employment typically is restricted. With high employment, the imbalance may be reduced (Hyman, Fryer, 1978). The market for a firm's products and the size of fixed costs influence the power disparity, because they partially determine the cost to the firm of labor withdrawal (Hill, 1981).

Trade unions generally express two concerns: One is the improvement of their market capacity. Their collective strength as an of organization enables them to secure economic rewards which otherwise could not be obtained. The second concern is offsetting the domination and control of the owners of the work place; and maintaining or gaining some control at work (Hill, 1981).

Union leaders most often insist on pursuing demands with regard to improvements of economic conditions rather than work control issues. Most often, the employers will agree to grant economic incentives, but will resist enacting demands regarding job control. In effect, the unions pursue demands when they recognize a chance of succeeding (Johnson, 1975).

Two conditions are necessary for the successful achievement of economic demands. First, the workers should be able to negotiate increases in real wages without compromising the financial interest of capital. The economy, therefore, must produce sufficient wealth to satisfy the workers' economic demands, and labor productivity must increase. Dynamic economic conditions are necessary to satisfy union demands; diminishing rates of economic growth mean that the economic strivings of unions would be less easily accommodated. Second, the union should not dispute the frame of the overall existing reward system and should not make demands to threaten it (Hill, 1981).

During the Second Republic (1918-1939), the miners' union covered a wide range of miners' concerns. The demands centered around wages, hours of work, and other basic issues contributing to improving of the material conditions of miners. However, other demands associated with specific working conditions, job control, and retirement provisions were also important. The present paper looks at the Wieliczka mining union demands in its relation to a changing market economy. More specifically, it examines how quantity and occurrence of specific demands, such as wages, working conditions, and retirement benefits change with fluctuation of Polish economy during the years 1918-1939.

### THE STATE ECONOMIC SITUATION

After World War I, the province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, known as "Galicia," became part of Polish territory. A description of the Polish post-war economy can be divided into three phases. The first phase (1918-1924) was characterized by reconstruction of the country. The need for recovery and expansion of both domestic and international markets created favorable conditions for industrial production, resulting in increases from 1918 to 1924 (Buszko, 1989, pp. 236-237). This increase made possible for the addition of extra labor, primarily peasants, who fled to the cities into the production process.

In 1920, the Wieliczka mine reached the highest level of employed miners (2,550) in its history (Archiwum Zup Krakowskich (hereafter cited as AZK)). With new technological innovations, work productivity was steadily increased. [For specific increases in the production level of the Wieliczka mine refer to the previous paper].

During this period of time, the power of the miners' union and of the bargaining process was relatively high due to high levels of membership. In 1924, for example, 2,408 out of the 2,900 employed miners in the region's salt mines belonged to the union. There were lenient and, on occasion, even favorable attitudes on the part of the salt mine

administration toward the union (Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 270; Pilch, 1987, p. 98). This period was characterized by sharp increases of real wages, which was due mainly to the increased strength of the working class who successfully struggled for its own interests. Government's fear of the increasing radicalization of the proletariat moved officials to pressure industrial capitalists to grant specific concessions (Pilch, 1987, p. 168).

The second phase was marked by stagnation and slow-down. Due to the enactment of a currency reform, stagnation in the industry occurred from 1924 to 1927. During this time, the cost of living rose 68 percent, unemployment steadily increased (Buszko, 1989, 248).

The gains of the working class achieved during the postwar period began to diminish. Industry shifted the cost of achieving economic stability to the working class; this found expression in the partial or total closing of many firms. In order to minimize the cost of production, work time was lengthened, wages decreased, etc.

A mass reduction in employment occurred in the Wieliczka mine in 1925 (Napizod, 1925). The newspaper, Naprzod, in 1927, was replete with graphic descriptions of extreme poverty, the likes of which had never been experienced in the region. The difficult economic situation dictated a need for continuous development of workers' co-operative movements.

Due to the country's economic crisis, bargaining between the miner and union became defensive. Specific demands of the Wieliczka miners illustrate the position taken by labor. The socialist party propagated socioeconomic programs among workers in an attempt to expand unions, control relations in industrial operations, and establish a minimum pay scale (Naprzod, 1924). The union repeated demands regarding the rising cost of living and the enactment of social control over the industry through worker participation.

The party reminded unions that a strike is a weapon available to workers, but cautioned them that it should be used only after other means failed. The unions' main purpose was to achieve collective agreements through the bargaining process.

Following a brief period of economic improvement in 1927-1928, a third phase was entered. This period was characterized by an economic crisis that saw the stagnation of large industries, a decline of small workshops, and increasing unemployment. In the fall of 1929, with the onset of the Great Depression, the deepest crisis in the history of capitalism system, was evident. There was a steep decline of the nation's industrial economy, massive unemployment, and rising prices. Industrial production reached its lowest level in 1932 (Polonsky, 1972, pp. 23-24; Buszko, 1989, pp. 290-291).

In industry, the crisis was manifested in decreased levels of production. The drop in industrial productivity influenced the level of employment and caused a decrease in wages, increases in the intensity of work, and other changes in the workers' material conditions. In Poland, as in other countries with an agricultural-industrial structure, the crisis did not end in 1933, although slight improvement was evident. The crisis was overcome in 1935. (Buszko, 1989, pp. 284-285, 290-292; Pilch, 1987, pp. 343).

The duration of Poland's economic crisis was partly related to the political economy of the government. Its passivity and lack of initiative, unfettered support of the interests of capitalists, and avoidance of more radical measures regarding foreign capital all contributed to the length of the crisis and its acute character (Buszko, 1989; Pilch, 1987, pp. 196, 257).

In preparation for the coming war, industry experienced strong boom from 1937 to 1939. Industrial production increased to the level it was in 1928 (Buszko, 1989, p. 307).

**CONTENT OF DEMANDS**

The economic and social conditions of the working class under capitalism are structured by the socio-economic relations of workers, and are expressed by the worker's idea of their interests in the form and content of workers' demands. As an expression of the workers' fundamental interests, the demands were mainly concerned with the level of wages, working conditions, and job security (Muller-Jentsch and Sperling, 1978, p. 264).

**Wage Demands**

During the Second Republic, the miners' union emphasized wage demands. As Muller-Jentsch and Sperling (1978, p. 265) point out, although wage demands express the price of labor commodity under capitalism, also they more readily can be translated into conflict than other conditions.

From 1918 to 1924, the miners' union used changes in the cost of living, to support their demand for increased wages, or at least pay increases that would equal the income of other miners. For example, the salaries of coal miners at the time were approximately 10 percent higher than the salt miners' salaries (Naprzod, 1918). Another wage demand during the years after the War was for back pay to compensate for changes in monetary values (Poland-Austria). Occasionally,

the demands were supported by short lived strikes or demonstrations (AZK, Naprzod 1918 to 1924).

Other than demands for real wage increases, the miners also demanded specific allowances which, in fact, would have had more impact on improving their economic conditions than would small increases in real wages (Dobrowolska, 1965, p. 269; Naprzod 1918 to 1924; AZK). Such allowances included housing, clothing, fuel subsidies, and changes in the allocation of the amounts of certain goods such as salt which could be sold for personal gains.

During a mild recession from 1924 to 1927, union policy aimed at preserving miners' earnings; but the union's attempts were not effective. Although the state increased miners' salary several times, their standard of living did not improve since inflation progressed at a faster rate than the increase in wages. For example, in 1927, the miners received an 8 percent wage increase, but the standard of living during that year increased 11 percent (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 118-120; AZK).

During the Great Depression, the union was mainly involved in defensive politics. Workers were forced to grapple with reductions in production, increased unemployment, and the closing of entire industries. The state enacted a 13 percent wage decrease for the salt mine workers in Wieliczka. Long lasting campaigns by miners against these decreases

proved futile. To add insult to injury, the salt mine occasionally was closed down over a period of several weeks as a cost-cutting measure (Naprzod 1929 to 1935, AZK, Gornik 1930 to 1934).

#### **Demands Regarding Working Conditions**

In addition to wage conditions, miners demanded specific changes in their work conditions. Immediately following World War I, miners demanded changes in pay days, the number of hours of work per week, and abolition of the night shift. All of these conditions were introduced along with demands for a universal pay raise (Naprzod 1918 to 1924, AZK). In addition, miners demanded to be informed on all issues regarding workers. Since demands for better working conditions were always introduced along with wage demands by themselves, they never led to a strike.

During the depression, a state reform on working conditions was enacted. According to the decree, the work week was raised from 40 hours to 48 hours per week and the number of days of paid vacations was reduced. Negotiations between the union and the administration of the state failed to bring positive results for the workers (Naprzod 1929 to 1934, AZK).

### Retirement Demands

In addition to wage increases and demands for better working conditions, miners often introduced demands for retirement benefits. Retirement law at the time guaranteed one of the most important rights of Wieliczka miners. It was based on both the general miners' statutes from 1854 and on the decree of the Ministry of Finance from 1873. The right to retirement applied to all permanently employed miners after 35 years of work and after 10 years of employment in case of an inability to continue working. The highest retirement pension was granted to miners who had worked for 40 or more years (Dobrowolska, 1965, pp. 122-123).

Following World War I, miners started proposing demands for improvements in retirement conditions. In 1918, a statute was enacted which proved more beneficial to miners than the two earlier statutes enacted by the Austro-Hungarian regime. The statute was modified in 1924, however, and the modifications proved less fortuitous for the workers than either the 1918 statute or the earlier Austro-Hungarian measures (AZK).

Miners demanded specific changes of the retirement statute during the late 1920s but no provision was ever granted. In fact, in 1934, a new retirement statute was enacted which was even more unfavorable than the existing one.

Union demands regarding improvements of the retirement statute were not satisfied until 1937.

The above demands by workers occurred during a period of relative economic well-being. However, workers' demands declined considerably during tougher economic times. At those times, miners concentrated on retaining earlier accrued benefits.

**CONCLUSION**

The present paper looks at the demands by miners for better wages, working conditions, and retirement benefits in the period from 1918 to 1939. How these demands fluctuated, based on changes in the market, are emphasized.

Following World War I, the country started reconstruction process characterized by expansion of the national as well as international markets. The production of industries was steadily increasing the level of employment sharply rising.

During this period, the miners' union increased its power due to a growing number of members and lenient attitudes of the state administration. Favorable market conditions and the strength of the union enabled miners to pursue improvements in their material conditions. Most often miners demanded increases of wages, i.e., equal salary for all miners, and compensatory pay. Allowances, such as housing, clothing, fuel subsidies, were often demanded. In addition to wage conditions, miners demanded changes in working conditions and enactment of changes in retirement statute.

The interwar period was characterized by an unstable economy with short periods of recession alternating with relative stability. The periods of recession and the Great Depression created conditions for the exploitation of miners. The employer regulated the outcome of production with regard

to market conditions, but disregarded the conditions of the working class.

In the period of the economic recession, which occurred from 1924 to 1927, productivity of the country's industry declined and rate of unemployment steadily increased. Some industrial establishments were closed down, others attempted to lower the cost of production by extending working hours and decreasing workers' wages. The Wieliczka mine reduced its labor force considerably. Fearing losing accrued benefits, miners engaged themselves in a defensive bargaining process, aiming at preserving earnings, which were losing their value due to progressing inflation.

After a four-year lasting recession a brief period of economic improvement occurred which was followed by the Great Depression. This economic crisis was characterized by precipitous decline of the economy, massive unemployment, and rapidly rising prices. As a consequence, the salt mine in Wieliczka was shot down several times for a period of a few weeks, labor force considerably reduced, wages diminished, and the work week hours extended. The negotiations between miners and the state regarding wage decreases and upholding existing working conditions were unproductive.

The beneficial retirement provision statute was enacted following World War I. However, its modifications implemented at the beginning of recession and the end of the Great

Depression deprived miners of this favorable retirement provision. Miners' demands concerning changes in the retirement provision were not satisfied until 1937.

The economic conditions were mirrored by miners' demands in the quantity and occurrence of various benefits. During periods of relative economic stability, miners demands were frequent, and focused on increased wages and improved job conditions. During periods of recession or depression, miners demands were more sporadic and, in most instances, related to job security and the mere preservation of existing conditions.

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**CONCLUSION**

This study analyzed the applicability of Scoville's model of the labor's movements formation and evolution to Wieliczka's miners' labor movement. The various propositions of the model were tested in three distinct papers. The first paper examined factors which shaped the formation, development, and goals of the labor movement. The results of the study support Scoville's predictions that the market conditions, the employment conditions, and the groups of intellectuals which allies with workers impinge upon the labor movement structure and its goals. The formation of the Wieliczka's labor movement is closely related to the working community. The specificity of the industry, that is, harsh working conditions, constant danger, and isolation created the basis for miners' solidarity. In addition, such factors as homogeneity, professional hierarchy, and miner-manager relations produced strong bond between miners which, in turn, help to establish the basis for collective mobilization. The specifics of miners' work community served as prerequisites in the formation of strong worker organizations, as well as factors which aided in the development of the union.

The Scoville's model outlines the national market conditions which influence the structure and goals of the movement. This study looked only at the conditions of the

salt market. Under the Austrian regime, salt production remained at the same level while the labor force of the mine steadily increased. With the take-over of the mine by the Polish Second Republic, miners were faced with constantly changing labor market. The increase of salt production and reduction of the labor force resulted in changes of economic goals of the union.

The intellectuals have a particular impact on the shape of the labor movement in Wieliczka's salt mine. The political parties served as the genesis of the miners' unions. The unions created by the party adopted strategies which were compatible with parties' ideology in pursuing strategies. The Social Democratic Party was the most influential among miners in Wieliczka and a firm supporter of the miners' socialistic labor union. The unions created by the Christian Democratic Party and the right wing bourgeois party never played an important role in the Wieliczka labor movements.

Scoville's model focuses on importance of intellectuals and ideology in structuring the labor movement and general strike as a major weapon in obtaining goals. This study proposed that the worker's major weapon in achieving goals is class consciousness. The study analyzed the intellectual's influence on the development of the miners' class consciousness. To depict the role of the intellectuals, the analysis preceded with the assessment of workers'

consciousness created by the self-operating everyday activities of miners. The result of this analysis suggests that miners, left to themselves, are able to develop only limited, parochial type of consciousness leading only to local challenges of unjust conditions. However, the miners were able to develop socialistic awareness with the aid of intellectuals. Through the agitation, propaganda, and education, the intellectuals channelled the miners' beliefs into a new vision of society. However, contrary to Scoville's predictions, the miners' union did not change its revolutionary ideology, when the party's ideology became reformist.

The study also examined the impact of changing market economy on modification of miners' economic goals. The interwar period was characterized by an unstable economy, with short periods of recession alternating with relative stability. During the period of stability, miners' demands were frequent, and mainly related to increase of wages. During the periods of recession or the Great Depression, miners' demands were rather sporadic and in most instances related to job security and the mere preservation of existing conditions.

The general implications of the study is the notion that this type of analysis requires an interdisciplinary approach. Secondly, it supports a view that a general pattern common to

all labor movements will not be depicted in a labor movement in a particular location and industry.

Since the study was limited to only one specific group of workers, it was unable to test all propositions outlined by Scoville. The further attention in research should be given to other dimensions of industrial structure which influence the character of the labor movement. More specifically, how size, distribution of industry, and industrial types of enterprises impacts on the structure and goals of labor movements.

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