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New miners in the Ruhr. Rebuilding the workforce in the Ruhr mines, 1945-1958. Summary

In 1945, the Ruhr pits faced enormous gaps in the workforce as a result of wartime losses and pre-war difficulties in recruiting young labour. Regenerating the workforce was the key to reviving Ruhr coal production and thus to German and Western European economic recovery. Between 1945 and the onset of the coal crisis in 1958, the Ruhr mines were to hire over a million men. Using archival materials, private papers, contemporary printed sources and interviews, the thesis analyses the measures undertaken to win new labour for the Ruhr and the attempts to turn the newcomers into productive and settled miners.

After an introductory section, the study looks at the degree to which workforce regeneration was achieved in the pre-currency reform era. The underlying theme is that the pre-1948 economy proved in many ways to be an *uncontrolled* economy. Despite the enormous priority given to the task, the British initially failed to rebuild the workforce. With US help, they achieved a breakthrough in 1946-47, but the enterprise remained extremely costly and inefficient. These problems resulted from weaknesses inherent in any controlled economy but also from tensions and contradictions in British and later Bipartite rule.

The second half of the thesis considers the policies of the 1948-58 period and argues that they were just as unsuccessful in regenerating the mining workforce. Neither a stable nor a compliant workforce was created and in desperation the industry began to turn to foreign labour. One reason for failure was the Federal Government's slowness in responding to the mines' need for housing investment. Another reason was that the established management style in the Ruhr mines alienated many newcomers. The employers' attitudes to management, integration and the labour market were stuck in a pre-war mould.

This study contributes to our understanding of a number of different features of the reconstruction, notably the origins and limitations of the 'economic miracle', the impact of and response to the enormous population mobility after the war and the hopes and fears with which Germany's bourgeoisie entered the post-war era. Ultimately, however, the theme running through the study is the enormous and unique challenge that faced any organisation trying to create a stable and productive workforce in the mines.

New Miners in the Ruhr
Rebuilding the workforce in the
Ruhr mines, 1945 - 1958

Volume 1 of 2

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD of the University
of Warwick

Centre for the Study of Social History

December 1987

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Acknowledgements

So many people and institutions have helped me in the course of researching and writing this thesis that I would like to have produced the acknowledgements as a separate volume, divided into chapters. This being not customary, let me begin by thanking all those officials, miners, archivists, colleagues and friends who could not be named individually here, but who know how much they have helped me.

Among those who must be named are the patrons of the thesis, notably the then SSRC, which financed my initial two years, the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, the Leverhulme Trust and the German Historical Institute, London all of whom gave me generous grants to study in Germany. Special thanks go to Franz Eschbach of the DAAD, Jane Bennett of the Leverhulme Trust and Dr Bernd Weisbrod and Dr Gerhard Hirschfeld of the GHIL for their kindness and support. Aston University, my employer since 1984, generously gave travel grants to do the last pieces of research and provided the computer hard- and software which made writing up so much easier.

A great many archives and private institutions made papers available. Alongside the state and municipal archives, I would particularly like to thank the representatives of the private bodies which gave me access to their papers - Dr Kroker for the Bergbau-Archiv, Professor Dascha for the Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, the Bischöflicher Generalvikar of Münster and Dr Löffler for the Bistumsarchiv, Münster, Manfred Waarda and Norbert Ranft for the Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau und Energie, Herr Ganzen for the Landesoberbergamt, Dortmund, Dr Gierhardt for the Gesamtverband des deutschen Steinkohlenbergbaus, Herr Schroeder and Herr Bonhoeffer for permission to use papers at the Gneisenau colliery, Herr Fronz and Herr Kriener for the Westfälische Berggewerkschaftskasse, Dr Uli Borsdorf and Dr Dieter

Schuster for the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, Herr Franz for the Sozialforschungsstelle, Dortmund and Dr Werner Krause for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Henry Collins CBE, Wolfgang Gottschalk, Dr Ernst Schmidt and Dr Heinz Steffen kindly allowed me to see papers in their private possession. Special thanks should be given to Herr Marcus of the Statistik der Kohlenwirtschaft e.V., Norbert Ranft of the IGBE, Dr Romeyk of the Hauptstadtsarchiv, Düsseldorf, and Dr Unverferth of the Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, all of whom put their considerable knowledge at my disposal. The staff of the Bergbau-Bücherei, Essen-Kray, were most helpful in facilitating access to that library's marvellous collection.

In addition, the study benefited substantially from interviews with a number of present and former officials, managers, trade unionists, works councillors and miners. I cannot name all of them here but special thanks must be given to Henry Collins CBE, the former head of the North German Coal Control and later NCB director who as well as supplying many invaluable insights also commented on an early draft of the manuscript and Dr Heinz Steffen who as former personnel director at the Hamborner Bergwerks AG gave me a great deal of valuable information about the industry. To supplement my own interviews, the LUSIR group in Essen and Michael Zimmermann kindly gave me access to their interview transcripts. I am grateful also to Dr Gierhardt and Herr Arndt for organising a tour of the Friedrich Heinrich colliery which gave me the opportunity to experience mining work at first hand.

Research in a foreign country is always difficult initially, but in my case the support received from colleagues at the Ruhr universities took a lot of the pain out of the process. Professor Lutz Niethammer deserves special thanks for his hospitality and for introducing me to the members of the Essen-based LUSIR group, from whom I profited greatly. Professor Werner Abelshauser played the same role in Bochum and has consistently given a great deal of support.

encouragement and generous hospitality over the years. The influence of his work is apparent in many sections of the thesis. Professor Dietmar Petzina and Professor Karl Rohe also deserve thanks. To my colleagues Werner Milert, Dr Detlev Peukert, Dr Falk Wiesemann and Dr Michael Zimmermann, I am greatly indebted. Outside the academic community, the chance to meet new friends in the Ruhr made the research years there a marvellous experience and I would like to thank, for reasons they all know best, Heike Hogreve, Theo and Gabi Horstmann, Gabi Musebrink, Neylan and Eva-Maria Peine, Benno Reicher and Aron Reicher and family.

Closer to home, I am grateful to the many colleagues and friends at Aston who gave help and encouragement. Looking beyond the university's walls, I am particularly indebted to Dr Christian Kunz for friendship and support at every stage and for proof-reading the manuscript. Special thanks go also to my mother, Joan Roseman, for valuable stylistic advice given during early stages of writing. In addition, I would like to thank Dr Graham Cooper for his help and advice.

My biggest debt is to Professor Volker Berghahn. It is hard to conceive of a supervisor more supportive than he has been. If I can be one tenth as helpful to future students as he has been to me, they will be doing very well.

This study was embarked upon by a bachelor and completed by a father of three. For this change for the better, for their love and support and for hindering completion in the best possible way, I would like to dedicate the thesis to Sarah, Jacob, Abigail and Kateand to assure them that I do not intend to write a second one.

Abbreviations

AA / AÄ	-----	Arbeitsamt / Arbeitsämter
AA Do	-----	Arbeitsamt Dortmund
AAA	-----	Arbeitseinsatz- und Ausbildungsausschuß der DKBL [later UVR]
Arb.aus.f.A	-----	Arbeitsausschuß für Ausbildungsfragen
ABB	-----	Außenstelle Bergbau des Landesarbeitsamtes NRW
ASD-FES	-----	Archiv der Sozialdemokratie - Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bonn
AZG	-----	Archive of the Zeche Gneisenau, Dortmund
BA	-----	Bergamt
BAK/BAK-ZwSt.H	-----	Bundesarchiv Koblenz / Bundesarchiv, Zwischenstelle Hangelar
BAM	-----	Bundesarbeitsministerium
BAVAV	-----	Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeits- losenversicherung
BAWBG	-----	Gesetz zur Förderung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaues im Kohlenbergbau
BBA	-----	Bergbau Archiv, Bochum
BECG	-----	Bipartite Economic Control Group
BFM	-----	Bundesfinanzministerium
BGBI	-----	Bundesgesetzblatt
BICO	-----	Bipartite Control Office
BM	-----	Bistumsarchiv, Münster
BWIM	-----	Bundeswirtschaftsministerium
BWoM	-----	Bundesministerium für Wohnungsbau
CCCG	-----	Combined Coal Control Group [successor to UK/USCCG]

CCG(BE)	-----	Control Commission for German (British Element)
CDU	-----	Christlich-Demokratische Union
COCOM	-----	Coal Committee of the Bipartite Control Office
COPROD	-----	Coal Production Committee [precursor of COCOM]
DGB/DGBA	-----	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund/ Archive of the DGB, Düsseldorf
DHS	-----	Deutsche Hauptstelle für die Bekämpfung der Suchtgefahren
DKBL	-----	Deutsche Kohlenbergbauleitung
d.u.	-----	dwelling unit
ECA	-----	European Cooperation Administration [later MSA]
ECOSC	-----	Economic Subcommission
EGKS	-----	European Community for Coal and Steel
EIPS	-----	Economic and Industrial Planning Staff
ERP	-----	European Recovery Programme
GBAG	-----	Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks A.G.
Ges. Verb.	-----	Archive of the Gesamtverband des deutschen Steinkohlenbergbaus, Essen
GHH	-----	Gutehoffnungshütte
GMSO	-----	German Mines Supplies Organisation
HAfSH	-----	Hauptamt für Sofort-Hilfe
HStad	-----	Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf
HStad Kalkum	-----	Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, Zweigstelle Kalkum
IGB/IGBEA	-----	Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau/ Archive of the Industrie- gewerkschaft Bergbau und Energie, Bochum
IHG	-----	Investitions-Hilfegesetz
IVB	-----	Industrieverband Bergbau [later IGB]
JHStW PV	-----	Jugendheimstättenwerk Pestalozzi-Vereinigung e.V.
KAB	-----	Katholische Arbeiterbewegung
KfSA	-----	Kommission für Soziale Aufgaben

KPD	-----	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
LAA	-----	Landesarbeitsamt
MIC	-----	Mines Inspection Control
MSA	-----	Mutual Security Agency
NBB	-----	Bestimmungen über die Förderung des Wohnungsneubaues (Kleinwohnungen und Kleinsiedlungen) im Lande Nordrhein-Westfalen
NGCC	-----	North German Coal Control
NRW	-----	Nordrhein-Westfalen
OBAD/OBADA	-----	Oberbergamt Dortmund/Archive of the Landesoberbergamt, Dortmund
OMGUS	-----	Office of Military Government US
PA	-----	Parlamentsarchiv, Bonn
PORO	-----	Public Opinion Research Organisation, Political Division, CCG(BE)
PRO	-----	Public Record Office, Kew
RAG	-----	Revierarbeitsgemeinschaft für die kulturelle Bergmanns- betreuung
RCD	-----	Ruhr Coal District
RWKS	-----	Rheinisch-Westfälisches Kohlensyndikat
SBZ	-----	Sovietische Besatzungszone
SoFoSt/SoFoStA	-----	Sozialforschungsstelle, Dortmund/ Archive of the SoFoSt
Soz.Min.	-----	Sozialministerium NRW
SPD	-----	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
StaM	-----	Staatsarchiv Münster
StdKW	-----	Statistik der Kohlenwirtschaft e.V.
SVR	-----	Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk
UK/USCCG	-----	UK/US Coal Control Group
UVR	-----	Unternehmensverband Ruhrbergbau
VfF	-----	Verwaltung für Finanzen

VfW	-----	Verwaltung für Wirtschaft
VOB	-----	Verein oberer Bergbeamten
VSt	-----	Vereinigte Stahlwerke
VWG	-----	Vereinigtes Wirtschaftsgebiet
WAM	-----	Wiederaufbauministerium NRW
WAZ	-----	Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung
WBK/WBKA	-----	Westfälische Berggewerkschaftskasse/ Archive of the WBK, Bochum
WBSR	-----	Wohnungsbezirksstelle Ruhr of the WAM
WWA	-----	Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, Dortmund
ZAA	-----	Zentralamt für Arbeit
ZdKW	-----	Zahlen der Kohlenwirtschaft
ZfW	-----	Zentralamt für Wirtschaft

Introduction

Subject matter and background

At the end of the war, when the Allies liberated the foreign conscripts with whom the Germans had maintained their war effort, the Ruhr pits faced enormous gaps in the workforce. Intense competition for labour in the overheated economy of the 1930's, military call-up in wartime and losses on the battle-field had all taken their toll. Many of the miners remaining in 1945 were old or in poor health or both. The result was a pressing need to recruit and integrate new labour. It is no exaggeration to say that the key not just to the mining industry's future, but also to West German and, indeed, Western European economic recovery lay in rebuilding the colliery workforces of the Ruhr. Between the end of the war in 1945 and the onset of the coal crisis in 1958 the Ruhr mines were to hire over a million men. This thesis is about the measures undertaken to win new labour for the Ruhr and the attempts to turn the newcomers into productive and settled miners.

As is the case with any historical research, the interests and questions embodied in the present study can be seen as responses, in some areas critical responses, to the existing historiography. The general choice of subject matter was a conscious departure from the historiography as it existed at the beginning of the 1980's. Until then, few studies had looked in detail at the process of economic and social reconstruction. Historical treatment of the post-war era was for a long time focused on the question of why a fundamentally different, non-capitalist alternative did not materialise. Influenced by the general critical reappraisal of the Federal Republic which had been underway in the universities since the student revolt of the 1960's, most writers concentrated on analysing

the forces that had led to the 'restoration' and investigated whether there had at any point been a viable democratic-socialist alternative.¹

There is no doubt that this research produced many valuable insights, in particular dispelling for ever the myth that the FRG had somehow developed naturally while the GDR had been forced into shape by foreign decree. Yet from the beginning there was the problem that the notion of 'restoration' was too undifferentiated. It ignored the striking new features of the West German political-economic system, such as the speed of economic recovery and the degree of political stability that characterised it almost from the beginning. Secondly, the notion of capitalism itself was too undifferentiated. There was a tendency to underestimate the possible range of variations within the general system and thus to ignore the question of what *type* of capitalism emerged. Both of these tendencies encouraged historians to concentrate on the period prior to 1949, by which time the basic outline of the political and economic system had been established, to the detriment of discovering the many features that emerged only in the later stages of reconstruction. In addition, the search for democratic-socialist alternatives encouraged a familiar Germanic tendency to remain too narrowly political. The enormous social and economic challenges that faced the authorities after 1945 - and the response to those challenges - received little attention. Yet these problems and the need to respond to them, as well as being interesting in themselves, surely contributed to shaping the very political developments historians were trying to explain.

¹ The best introductions to the 'restoration' thesis are: Autorenkollektiv (Ernst-Ulrich Huster, Gerhard Kraiker et al), *Determinanten der westdeutschen Restauration 1945 - 1949*, Frankfurt/M 1972; Jürgen Kocka, '1945: Neubeginn oder Restauration?', in Carola Stern und Heinrich A. Winkler (eds.), *Wendepunkte deutscher Geschichte 1848 - 1945*, Frankfurt/M 1979, pp. 141 - 168; Gerold Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der sozialen Marktwirtschaft in Westdeutschland 1949 - 1949*, Stuttgart 1977. Among many studies focussing on the workers' movement see E. Schmidt, *Die verhinderte Neuordnung*, Frankfurt 1970; U. Schmidt and T. Fichter, *Der erzwungene Kapitalismus*, Berlin 1971; Ernst-Ulrich Huster, *Die Politik der SPD 1945 - 1950*, Frankfurt/M 1978.

At the beginning of the 1980's, therefore, there was a widespread feeling that it was time to look in more detail at the problems and policies of reconstruction. In 1975, Werner Abelshauser had been one of the first historians of the post-war era to leave the confines of political history and publish his influential account of economic recovery.¹ The last five to six years have seen a rapidly growing number of ventures into the economic and social history of the post-war years and of efforts to produce a more differentiated account of the emergence of the Federal German political-economic system.² This recent work has been influential on many aspects of the present investigation, but particularly on the sections concerned with economic policy.

New labour and economic recovery

One of the fruits of the work by Abelshauser and Adamsen has been to challenge traditional explanations of the economic miracle. The established view was that the recovery began in summer 1948 with the reinstatement of a largely liberalised market economy, the creation of a new currency and the adoption of a bundle of tax measures designed to encourage entrepreneurial initiative. The pre-currency reform period was generally portrayed as a period of restrictive Allied policy, inefficiency and shortages. By contrast, Abelshauser suggested that the seeds of economic recovery were sown long before the currency reform and indeed that the first fruits of growth were reaped as early as Autumn 1947.³

¹ Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland 1945-1948. Rekonstruktion und Wachstumsbedingungen in der amerikanischen und britischen Zone*, Stuttgart 1975. See also by the same author, 'Probleme des Wiederaufbaus der westdeutschen Wirtschaft 1945-1953', in H.A.Winkler (ed.), *Politische Weichenstellungen in Nachkriegsdeutschland*, Göttingen 1979, pp.208-253 and *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1980*, Frankfurt 1983.

² Recent studies include: Heiner R.Adamsen, *Investitionshilfe für die Ruhr. Wiederaufbau, Verbände und soziale Marktwirtschaft 1948 - 1952*, Wuppertal 1981; Hans Günther Hockerts, *Sozialpolitische Entscheidungen in Nachkriegsdeutschland. Alliierte und deutsche Sozialversicherungspolitik 1945-1957*, Stuttgart 1980; Dietmar Petzina and Walter Euchner (eds.), *Wirtschaftspolitik im britischen Besatzungsgebiet 1945 - 1949*, Düsseldorf 1984; Horst Thum, *Mitbestimmung in der Montanindustrie. Der Mythos vom Steg der Gewerkschaften*, Stuttgart 1982.

³ Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland*, *passim*.

The conventional contrast between ineffective controlled economy and successful market economy was thus presented with a serious challenge. Many other authors have adopted this view and in a recent essay on the British Zone, Falk Pingel argues that in sectors in which the British, for their own reasons, had a strong interest, respectable results were achieved from an early stage. The case of mining shows, he believes, that where the British were *willing* to promote rapid recovery, they were capable of it.¹

The other challenge which has been levelled at the conventional view of economic recovery is the argument that Erhard's 'laissez-faire' policies failed to provide the resources necessary for heavy industry's reconstruction. Both Abelshauser and Adamsen have drawn attention to the capital transfer schemes which Erhard, in conflict with his general policy, was compelled to accept in 1951 and 1952.²

In this context, the policies adopted towards rebuilding the workforce in the mining industry are of major interest. Abelshauser has shown the mining industry's almost unparalleled importance for German economic recovery.³ Twice within the first five years of German post-war history, in 1946 and 1950-1951, recovery and growth were seriously endangered by a shortage of coal. As the present study will demonstrate, the problem of rebuilding the labour force lay at the heart of the mining industry's difficulties. Regenerating the Ruhr workforce was therefore one of the central tasks of the reconstruction.

¹ Falk Pingel, 'Der aufhaltsame Aufschwung. Die Wirtschaftsplanung für die britische Zone im Rahmen der außenpolitischen Interessen der Besatzungsmacht', in Petzina and Euchner (eds.), *Wirtschaftspolitik*, pp.41-64, here p.46.

² See Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.65ff; Werner Abelshauser, 'Ansätze "korporativer Marktwirtschaft" in der Korea-Krise der frühen fünfziger Jahre. Ein Briefwechsel zwischen dem Hohen Kommissar John McCloy und Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1982, 30, 4, pp.715-756; Adamsen, *Investitionshilfe, passim*.

³ In addition to the references above, see Werner Abelshauser, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945. Wiederaufbau, Krise, Anpassung*, Munich 1984.

Apart from its objective importance, mining is a crucial test case of economic policy in the immediate post-war period because, as the reference to Falk Pingel has indicated already, it was given such a clear priority. Whereas in April 1945 virtually nothing about Germany's long-term economic future had been decided upon and the economic plans of the British and Americans were either punitive or nebulous or contradictory, there *was* agreement that Ruhr coal production should be maximised in the short-term.¹ The present study evaluates for the first time, using hitherto untapped primary sources, the degree to which the British and other interested groups were able to control and deploy human and material resources so as to obtain the so urgently desired coal. After the currency reform, rebuilding the labour force remains of vital interest not because it continued to enjoy priority but, on the contrary, precisely because the failure to provide the resources necessary to house and settle mining labour is seen as one of the key weaknesses of Erhard's economic policy.² The thesis analyses the degree to which this is so and compares the ability of the pre- and post-48 economic systems to solve mining's labour problems.

Workforce regeneration and industrial social policy

These questions about transfer and deployment of national resources embody the main interest of the subject for the *economic* historian. But as well as being a question of resource management, regenerating the workforce was also very much an issue of social policy. Particularly after 1948, when the urgency of coal demand abated somewhat and the Allies relinquished a lot of their direct control, colliery managements were faced with the challenge of creating a new, stable and productive workforce. Other organisations too, particularly the

¹ See chapter 2, page 57.

² Abelshauser, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, p.64ff.

mining union, had an interest in influencing and shaping the way in which new labour was drawn and integrated into the mining community.

Part of the interest of looking at the responses to this challenge is that, in general terms at least, what was happening in the mining industry was taking place all over Germany. The influx of newcomers into established communities whether as new labour for a particular industry or simply as homeless migrants in search of somewhere to settle, was one of the most pervasive phenomena of the reconstruction period. In 1945, something like two fifths of the German population had been on the move.¹ With time, almost every community in West Germany was affected. As regards new labour in particular, most industries had, like mining, experienced considerable war time losses, had had recourse to the expedient of forced labour from occupied Europe and were faced in the post-war period with the problem of rebuilding the workforce. They, like mining, were able to take advantage of the enormous pool of mobile labour that was available, comprising such groups as expellees, former evacuees, ex-POW's and the many more who had been impelled by material pressures and the disappearance of former sources of employment to seek new means of earning a living.

Despite the pervasiveness of population migrations and labour mobility, there are almost no established hypotheses or theories which the present investigation could adopt as its starting point. Industrial social policy in the post-war period remains almost virgin territory for the historian and there have been no studies of new labour in German industries.² True, the integration

¹ Manfred Overesch, *Deutschland 1945 - 1949. Vorgeschichte und Gründung der BRD. Ein Leitfaden in Darstellung und Dokumenten*, Königstein/Ts and Düsseldorf 1979, p.41.

² During the 1950's, new labour did receive some attention from sociologists, particularly in Carl Jantke, *Bergmann und Zeche. Die sozialen Arbeitsverhältnisse einer Schachanlage des nördlichen Ruhrgebietes in der Sicht der Bergleute*, Tübingen 1955 (Continued overleaf.)

of the expellees and refugees¹ has received a great deal of attention, and the many excellent studies in this area have provided valuable information and insights about the experiences, mentality, legal status and other characteristics of the large minority of the new miners (probably around a third of them) who were refugees.² However, they did not produce hypotheses pertinent to this study, partly because refugee policy tended to leave off where industrial new labour policy began. Once the refugee had been secured employment and a place to stay, the primary task of those who were responsible for refugee integration had been solved; the task of the employers to mould and integrate the newcomer, on the other hand, had only just begun.

and in Theo Pirker, S.Braun, B.Lutz, *Arbeiter Management, Mitbestimmung, eine industriesoziologische Untersuchung der Struktur, der Organisation und des Verhaltens der Arbeiterbelegschaft in Werken der deutschen Eisen- und Stahlindustrie, für die das Mitbestimmungsgesetz gilt*, Stuttgart und Düsseldorf 1955. The only historical study to deal with new labour is a short *Examensarbeit* at the University of Essen based on interviews with new miners. See Ingrid Grundmann, 'Erfahrungen Essener Neubergleute. Untersuchungen zur Problematik Vertriebener im Ruhrgebiet nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg', (Hausarbeit für die erste Staatsprüfung für das Lehramt, Essen 1981).

¹ 'Expellees' were the former citizens of Germany's lost Eastern territories, deprived of their former homeland; 'refugees' were Germans who fled from the Soviet Zone of Occupation, later the G.D.R. For the sake of convenience, 'refugee' is frequently used in the present study as a generic term for both groups; where the narrower definition is meant, this is made clear in the text.

² A useful survey of contemporary refugee studies can be found in Peter Waldmann, 'Die Eingliederung der Vertriebenen in die Westdeutsche Gesellschaft', in Josef Becker, Theo Stammen, Peter Waldmann (eds.), *Vorgeschichte der BRD. Zwischen Kapitulation und Grundgesetz*, Munich 1979, pp.163-192 esp. pp.163-4. Among the most important of contemporary studies was the three volume collection by Eugen Lemberg and Friedrich Edding (eds.), *Die Vertriebenen in Westdeutschland. Ihre Eingliederung und Ihr Einfluß auf Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Geistesleben*, Kiel 1959. See also Elisabeth Pfeil's studies, *Der Flüchtling: Gestalt einer Zeitwende*, Hamburg 1948 and *Fünf Jahre später. Die Eingliederung der Heimatvertriebenen in Bayern bis 1950*, Frankfurt/M 1951. Of interest for the Ruhr region is Gertrud Stahlberg, *Die Vertriebenen in Nordrhein-Westfalen*, Berlin 1957. A review of historical research on the refugee question can be found in Hellmuth Auerbach, 'Literatur zum Thema. Ein kritischer Überblick', in Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten. Ursachen, Ereignisse, Folgen*, Frankfurt/M 1985, pp.219 - 231. This collection represents the most accessible summary of recent German scholarship on the refugees. See also Franz J. Bauer, *Flüchtlinge und Flüchtlingspolitik in Bayern 1945 bis 1950*, Stuttgart 1982; Siegfried Bethlehem, *Heimatvertreibung, DDR-Flucht, Gastarbeiterzuwanderung: Wanderungsströme und Wanderungspolitik in der BRD*, Stuttgart 1982 and Hans Schönberg, *Germans from the East. A Study of their migration, resettlement and subsequent group history*, The Hague 1970. Of particular interest for the Ruhr are Falk Wiesemann, 'Flüchtlingspolitik in Nordrhein-Westfalen', in Benz (ed.), *Die Vertreibung*, pp.173-182 and Falk Wiesemann and Uwe Kleinert, 'Flüchtlinge und wirtschaftlicher Wiederaufbau in der britischen Besatzungszone', in Petzina and Euchner (eds.), *Wirtschaftspolitik*, pp.297 - 326.

The absence of relevant theories is also a sign that much of the mining industry's problem was unique. It had its roots as much in the collieries' special long-term failure to draw and integrate new recruits as in the war-time losses with which every industry had been afflicted. Even before the war, the collieries had felt it necessary to develop strategies for regenerating the workforce. Seen against this long-term background, it can be seen that the post-war situation was both challenge and *opportunity* for the mining industry. War and its aftermath intensified the shortage of labour, it is true, but also unleashed new and sizeable labour reserves. Mining was probably unique among German industries in seeing in the post-war labour market a chance to surmount long-standing labour problems. Because of this specific mining background, looking at the industry's new labour policy says probably more about the hopes and anxieties with which mining managers - and trade unionists - entered the new era, about their attitudes to industrial relations and about the type of workforce they wished to create, as it does about the general phenomenon of regenerating the German labour force.

There is, however, one established, general hypothesis which is relevant to the present investigation, namely, that post-war Germany's huge population of migrant labour, particularly the refugees, acted as a 'reserve army', depressing wages and generally weakening labour's position in relation to the employers. This view, though seldom the subject of serious study, has long been part of received wisdom about the post-war period.¹ In the course of analysing the way in which the influx of new labour was shaped and managed, the thesis therefore looks at whether the employers were able to exploit the situation and

¹ See for example Christopher Huhne's review of Alec Cairncross's study of British economic policy after the war in *The Guardian*, Friday 2 August, 1985. Huhne writes that 'Britain had no reserve army of labour, like the refugees who flooded into West Germany or the farmers sucked from France's land, so there was (in Britain, MR) a relative lack of 'labour discipline' and a willingness to maintain time-honoured demarcations'.

increase their power vis à vis the workers, for instance by imposing new practices or output norms.

Sources

Because the period under review is a fairly recent one, the strengths and weaknesses of the documentation differ from those for similar projects covering earlier periods. Much of the material gleaned for this study was found not in archives but in the file cabinets and cellars of institutions which are still active today. The material was often not properly ordered and finding documents of historical value was a time-consuming process; however, the advantage of covering such a recent period is that everyday records and papers are still intact. In a few years, it is probable that much of the interesting documentation looked at will end up in the paper shredder.

Investigation of the measures aimed at the new miners involved using the papers of the following organisations: various sections of Military Government, British, American, Bipartite and Quadripartite, in particular in the field of Manpower, Coal and Economics; a large number of regional bureaucracies, particularly the North-Rhine Westphalian Ministries of Reconstruction, Economics, Labour, Welfare and Culture, the regional Mining Inspectorate in Dortmund (and some of the local Inspectorates), the Mining Section of the Regional Labour Administration (Außenstelle Bergbau des Landesarbeitsamtes) and some of the local labour exchanges and, finally, the Ruhr Regional Planning Authority (Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk, now Kommunalverband Ruhr); the Federal Ministries concerned and their predecessors, above all the Central Office for Labour (Zentralamt für Arbeit), the Department of Economics of the Bizonal Executive Council (Verwaltung für Wirtschaft), the Mining Department of the Ministry for Economics, the Interministerial Committee on Production in Coal Mining, and the Federal Housing and Labour Ministries;

many industrial sources, among them employers' records for individual pits and from the Employers' Association for Ruhr Mining (Unternehmensverband Ruhrbergbau),¹ works councils, the Mining Trade Union IG Bergbau (now IG Bergbau und Energie), the German Trade Union Federation as well as the body responsible for running the mines' training schools, the Westfälische Berggewerkschaftskasse; a number of outside religious and political organisations including the Catholic Diocese of Münster, the Social Office of the Protestant Church of Westphalia (isolated papers), the Westphalian section of the Social Democratic Party (again only limited papers) and a private collection of Communist Party materials.

Social historians dealing with periods prior to 1945 and, particularly, prior to the 1930's and 1940's will envy the writer the quality of the statistical materials that were available to him. It was rarely necessary to use mass data, payrolls or wage tables: detailed information about the social composition of the workforce, the places of origin of the men, living conditions and so forth is available in collated form.

Although the statistical materials are thus generally good, the centralisation of Germany's social and political institutions did introduce some methodological difficulties. The era following the Second World War was a phase in German history in which the power of municipal institutions had reached its lowest ebb. As the Germans became more aware in the 1960's and 1970's of the need for planning at all levels, local institutions won back some of the functions they had lost to regional and national government. When historians come to deal with these years, they will find a wealth of detailed information which takes account of local variations and looks at social processes from a level closer to

¹ Unfortunately the documentation of the Deutsche Kohlenbergbauleitung (DKBL), which ran the industry from 1947 to 1953, is largely inaccessible to the historian.

the ground, so to speak, than could the regional and national institutions which supplied the bulk of the data used here. Statistical comparisons of different areas within the Ruhr, for example, were almost impossible to make with the available sources.

Turning to a quite different type of source material, many of the men who were involved in rebuilding the workforce are still alive as are many of the new miners themselves; these have been able to give expert advice and resolve a number of problems which the documentation had raised or left unanswered. Amongst the interviewees were new miners, trade unionists, works councillors (both Communist and Social Democrat), representatives of collieries, of the Employers Association, the Miners' Union, the Deputy (ie. acting) Controller General of the North German Coal Control (the British body which ran the Ruhr mining industry) and others.

Interviews can supply more than expert advice. Through longer interviews with former new miners (in part carried out by myself, in part by the LUSIR¹ oral history project), it was possible to gain insights into a number of areas which are otherwise very hard to document. The detailed autobiographies supplied by the interview partners gave valuable clues as to why some miners stayed and others left. The interviews exposed local variations and idiosyncracies that do not appear in the documents and the respondents were also able to describe incidents and developments in their relations with the established workforce and to suggest ways in which the new miners may have altered the society around them. It was essential to treat this information very cautiously. Not all the miners interviewed had stayed in the mines but all had stayed in the Ruhr region and most still had something to do with mining; the leavers were much

¹ 'Lebensgeschichte und soziale Kultur im Ruhrgebiet'.

harder to find.¹ Long interviews are so time-consuming to conduct and evaluate that only a very limited number is practicable in a research project primarily using other materials. Statistically meaningful analyses of such small samples are impossible.

One invaluable source which supplemented this information was the series of empirical social research projects carried out by the Sozialforschungsstelle in Dortmund and some other institutions.² Overshadowed by the brash and often speculative pronouncements of Schelsky and a few others,³ this painstaking research is only now being rediscovered by historians of the post-war period. Such studies deliberately restricted their theoretical ambitions and suppressed the desire to contribute directly to broad theories of social change. The authors were keenly aware of the way the Nazi era had interrupted empirical research and wanted to create a new corpus of hard fact and observations on which future theories might be built. The result is that their work contains a wealth of information (from which the present investigation has benefited greatly) about workers in the post-war period. In addition to the published material, some of the original questionnaires and survey data have been preserved and these were generously made available to the author.

¹ The significance of distinguishing between the stayers and the leavers, although in a slightly different context, is neatly demonstrated in Detlev Peukert, 'Kolonie und Zeche. Arbeiterradikalismus, Widerständigkeit und Anpassung der Bergarbeiter zwischen Faschismus und Wirtschaftswunder', *Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen für Unterricht und Studium*, 1980, pp.24 - 30.

² These include: Helmuth Croon and Kurt Utermann, *Zeche und Gemeinde. Untersuchungen über den Strukturwandel einer Zechengemeinde im nördlichen Ruhrgebiet*, Tübingen 1958; Carl Jantke, *Bergmann und Zeche. Die sozialen Arbeitsverhältnisse einer Schachtanlage des nördlichen Ruhrgebiets in der Sicht der Bergleute*, Tübingen 1955; Helmut Klages, *Der Nachbarschaftsgedanke und die nachbarliche Wirklichkeit in der Großstadt*, Cologne and Opladen 1958; D. v. Oppen, *Familien in ihrer Umwelt. Äußere Bedingungen von Familien im Prozeß der industriellen Verstädterung einer Zechengemeinde*, Cologne and Opladen 1958; Elisabeth Pfeil, *Die Wohnwünsche der Bergarbeiter. Soziologische Erhebung, Deutung und Kritik der Wohnvorstellungen eines Berufes*, Tübingen 1954; Kurt Utermann, *Fretzeitprobleme bei der männlichen Jugend einer Zechengemeinde*, Cologne and Opladen 1957.

³ See Helmut Schelsky, *Auf der Suche nach Wirklichkeit*, Düsseldorf and Cologne 1965.

Alongside independent work from institutions like the Sozialforschungsstelle, the interested authorities also carried out or commissioned a number of social surveys amongst miners in general and new miners in particular. Military Government research teams elicited a great deal of information from miners in 1946 and 1947¹ and in later years public opinion research organisations such as EMNID and INFAS were commissioned to do the same by employers and state organisations.² This type of survey material was supplemented by newspaper reports, based largely on a number of excellent collections of newspaper clippings.³ Another valuable source on social conditions and miners' behaviour are the Situation Reports of the Mining Inspectorate.

Definitions

Most of the specialist terms employed in the thesis are either self-explanatory or elucidated in the text, but it may be as well to define at the outset the way in which the terms 'new labour' and 'new miner' are employed. In the parlance of the 1940's and 1950's, '*Neubergleute*', or 'new miners', was a term used to describe men who, with other working experience behind them, came to the mines as

¹ Among the Military Government surveys are: German Personnel Research Branch, Intelligence Division, CCGBE, Social Survey No. 1, 'Attitudes of Germans to coal mining' (1946); Social Survey No. 4, 'The coal miner and his family. A study in incentives' (1946); Social Survey No. 5, 'The life and working conditions of the mining trainee' (1947); Public Opinion Research Organisation, Political Division, CCG(BE) (PORO) (ed.), *The Ruhr Miner and his family 1947. A social survey*, Bielefeld 1948 and PORO (ed.), *A social survey: The mining 1947*, Bielefeld 1948. These surveys are to be found either in the Public Record Office, London (PRO), file FO 1005,1738 and the Bergbau-Bücherei, Essen-Kray.

² EMNID survey, 'Die Meinung des Bergmanns', (1952), the results of which are to be found in the archive of the Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau und Energie (IGBEA), File 'T4': a private investigation into the relationship between new and old miners was carried out by Walter Köpping, 'Welches Verhältnis hat der gelernte bzw. der ungelernete Bergmann zu seinem Beruf? Eine soziologisch-empirische Untersuchung', (1952), to be found in the above file; Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt, 'Die subjektiven und objektiven Abkehrgründe bei 7 Zechen des westdeutschen Steinkohlenbergbaus in ihrer Auswirkung auf die Sicherung des Belegschaftsstandes unter Tage', (1955) a copy of which is in possession of the Gesamtverband des deutschen Steinkohlenbergbaus, Essen (Ges.Verb.); Institut für angewandte Sozialwissenschaft, 'Untersuchung über die Fluktuation der Arbeitskräfte im Steinkohlenbergbau. Ergebnisbericht', (Bad Godesberg 1966) a copy of which is to be found at the Gesamtverband.

³ These are in the IGBEA, Stadtarchiv Herne, Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf (HStaD), the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung - Archiv der Sozialdemokratie, Bonn and Bergbau-Archiv Bochum (BBA).

adults to retrain as miners. A more precise term for the same group was '*Umschüler*', or 'adult trainees'. Both terms are used interchangeably in the present text. The term 'new labour', by contrast, denotes all new recruits, irrespective of their age or previous working experience. (In early chapters, 'new labour' and 'new miner' are used as virtual equivalents since the vast majority of recruits were in fact adult trainees.)¹

Youngsters of 17 or less, who entered the industry straight from school as apprentices (*Berglehrlinge*), or juvenile trainees (*Bergjungleute*), were not normally classed as 'new miners'. The logic behind reserving the term 'Neubergleute' for the adults was that youngsters were regarded as the industry's traditional source of intake, whereas the adult trainees were a special product of the post-war era. In fact, however, since many of the mining apprentices in the post-war period came from other regions and social backgrounds, they were just as much a new source of labour as the 'new miners' proper. Where the study wishes to deal with all such new groups together, this is made clear in the text.

Structure of the thesis

It remains to give a brief outline of the thesis structure.

Chapter one provides the background to the study with a general description of the Ruhr area, a short account of Ruhr mining's development up to 1945 and a more detailed analysis of the industry's pre-war and wartime labour problems and policies. One of the themes of the latter analysis is that the pre-war era saw the emergence of a strategy of 'immaterial gratification', whereby mining's fundamental inability to stay ahead of iron and steel wages was to be countered

¹ For stylistic reasons, the term 'new miner' has been employed in the thesis title. This is not meant to suggest that other categories of the mines' new labour will be ignored

by training and propaganda policies designed to enhance the status of the occupation.

The following three chapters belong together and look at the degree to which workforce regeneration was achieved in the pre-currency reform era. The underlying theme is that the pre-'48 economy proved in many ways to be an uncontrolled economy. Even the limited successes achieved were so costly that it seems very unlikely economic growth could have been sustained for long on such a basis. These problems were partly the result of weaknesses inherent in controlled economies but also of tensions and contradictions in the nature of British (and later Anglo-American) control, an argument summarised at the end of chapter 4.

The currency reform, while improving the material supplies problem, did not bring the industry relief. Chapter 5 looks at the way coal was starved of resources in the 1948-1951 period and again in the mid-1950's and demonstrates the German authorities' failure to come to terms with mining's special needs, particularly its lack of capital for house and hostel construction.

Chapter 5, in effect, marks a transition in the thesis by taking us into the post-'48 era and bringing to a close the analysis of national resource management. The following four chapters go on to investigate the way the employers approached workforce regeneration and at the other groups which supported or contested management's policies. Here too the underlying theme is of a failure of control, this time, a failure to control new labour's behaviour. Neither a stable nor a compliant workforce resulted from the massive labour influx of the post-war period and in desperation the industry began to turn to foreign labour.

It is questionable whether any policy could have reversed mining's underlying unattractiveness but, as both chapter 7 and the conclusion try to show, one of mining's fundamental problems was something that *could* have been changed.

namely the whole nature of industrial and human relations within the industry. It was management's authoritarianism, as much as the dark, dirt and danger that attended coal production, which undermined the attempt to integrate new labour.

Chapter 1: Industry, region and workforce 1850 - 1945

1: Ruhrpott and Ruhr pits. A general introduction

The Ruhr was Germany's most important coal field and had been so ever since the Kaiserreich. After the First World War, its importance had been enhanced by the loss of the Silesian field to Poland and until World War Two it supplied around 70 percent of German coal¹. But it was in the context of western Germany, the area that later became the territory of the FRG, that the dominance of the Ruhr was most pronounced. In 1936, for example, over 90 percent of the 117 million metric tons of hard coal produced within this area came from pits in the Ruhr.² The story of West German coal production was, therefore, in large part the story of the Ruhr.

Structure of the Region

Exploitation of the Ruhr coal field took off in the middle of the 19th Century. Until then, the limited mining activity in the region had been concentrated in the shallow seams in the south, along the Ruhr river itself. The knowledge that there were deeper, richer seams further north had been around for a long time but, because of the limitations of available technology, extraction had not been commercially viable. Technical progress in the second quarter of the century, capital accumulation in the region and the liberalisation of the mining laws all contributed to overcome this barrier and during the second half of the 19th

¹ In 1888, the Ruhr supplied 50% of Germany's coal production. This rose to 60% in 1913 and 70% throughout the 20's and 30's, Paul Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Ruhrgebiets*, Essen 1970, p.127. During the war, the Ruhr's importance declined relatively because of German acquisitions in Eastern Europe.

² Statistik der Kohlenwirtschaft e.V., Essen (ed.), *Zahlen der Kohlenwirtschaft (ZdKW)*, 34, p.3 (figure excludes the Saar, which did not become part of the BRD until the end of the period under review, and also the (very small) output of the Bavarian field).

century the Ruhr mining industry expanded with incredible speed.¹ Between 1850 and 1913 the workforce grew by a factor of thirty² and in the latter year nearly 400,000 miners were producing over 100 million tons of coal a year.³ By 1914, the Ruhr mining industry had reached maturity.

At the time of the Second World War the industry covered an area which at its widest point stretched some 60 - 70 miles from west to east and 25 - 30 miles in the north-south direction. Roughly speaking, the Ruhr river now marked the southern edge of the coalfield, although a few of the oldest pits in operation were still to be found on the south bank. To the West, the field extended across the Rhine as far as Kamp Lintfort, while the easternmost mines were clustered around the town of Hamm. The northern border was slowly being extended as the industry moved into ever deeper seams, and by the Second World War it had penetrated deep into the Vest Recklinghausen.

The growth of mining transformed the Ruhr from an agricultural area, not much different from surrounding regions, to possibly the largest heavy industrial concentration in the world.⁴ In 1850, the greater Ruhr area⁵ of around 1,700 square miles contained a population of 500,000; by 1905 this figure had increased almost sixfold to 2.8 million and in 1939, there were 4 1/4 million people in the Ruhr.⁶ Urbanisation went on apace and by 1939 population

¹ Klaus Tenfelde, *Sozialgeschichte der Bergarbeiterschaft an der Ruhr im 19. Jahrhundert*, Bonn 1981², p.163ff.

² There were 1,546 miners in the Ruhr in 1800, 12,741 in 1850 and 394,569 in 1913. Stephen Hickey, *Workers in Imperial Germany. The miners of the Ruhr*, Oxford 1985, p.13.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Heinz Günther Steinberg, *Sozialräumliche Entwicklung und Gliederung des Ruhrgebiets*, Bad Godesberg 1967, p.151.

⁵ i.e. the districts which later came to form the administrative area of the Ruhr Regional Planning Authority (Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk [SVR]).

⁶ All figures from Paul Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Ruhrgebiets*, Essen 1970, p.13, table 7.

density had become almost four times that of the surrounding region.¹ Visually, economically and socially the Ruhr was dominated by heavy industry. In 1933, coal mining and iron and steel accounted for over 50 percent of industrial employment in the region.² Coal mining was the biggest single employer and in the narrower Ruhr area provided almost two fifths of industrial employment.³ Even these figures do not show the full importance of heavy industry, for on its fortunes the prosperity of many other trades and industries depended.⁴

The other way of looking at this information is to recognise that mining was at no time the only industry in the Ruhr, in contrast to some other coalfields in Europe. Even an archetypal mining town like Bochum was characterised by growing economic diversification. By the end of the 19th Century, Bochum's miners were outnumbered by other industrial workers (although remaining the biggest single group).⁵ The 1920's and particularly the 1930's saw further diversification in the Ruhr with rapid growth of iron and steel, engineering, construction and services.⁶ The presence of alternative sources of employment was of crucial significance in affecting labour supply to the mines.

Distinctive though it was, the Ruhr was by no means homogeneous. Observers differ over how to divide up the region,⁷ but most would agree that the central mining area can be divided into a series of east-west stripes which rise somewhat towards the east, the differences between them stemming largely,

¹ Ibid., p.10, table 5.

² Ibid., p.102, table 40.

³ Ibid.

⁴ David Crew, *Town in the Ruhr. A social history of Bochum 1860 - 1914*, New York 1979, p.16.

⁵ Ibid., pp.15-16.

⁶ Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.91, table 36 and p.102, table 40.

⁷ See Wilhelm Brehpohl, *Industrievolk Ruhrgebiet im Wandel von der agraren zur industriellen Daseinsform dargestellt am Ruhrgebiet*, Tübingen 1957, *passim*; Steinberg, *sozialräumliche Entwicklung*; *passim*; Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.15.

though not exclusively, from the varying points in time at which they were penetrated by the mining industry.

Farthest south, along the Ruhr itself, is the oldest mining area, often referred to as the Ruhr Zone. Here, the pits were smallest and by the 1930's many had ceased operation; all the expanding collieries lay to the north. With certain exceptions such as the steel works in Hattingen, there was little other heavy industry either.¹ North of the Ruhr and extending from central Duisburg through the centre of Essen and Bochum to Dortmund lies what is commonly referred to as the Hellweg zone. In 1939, 35 percent of the Ruhr's population and around 60 percent of its industrial employment was concentrated in this strip.² It had been penetrated by the mining companies in the first half of the 19th century and in the 1930's was still the site of a thriving coal industry. In 1939, 44 percent of all miners in the Ruhr were to be found in the Hellweg and Ruhr Zones.³ Despite mining's undoubted importance, the urban centres of the Hellweg predated the mining industry. Dortmund and Duisburg in particular had been significant (although small) commercial centres well before industrialisation began. As a result, the range of trades and services in the Hellweg area was greater and the structure of employment more differentiated than in other mining areas. In 1939, almost 30 percent of local employment lay in the service sector.⁴ The Hellweg was also the area where the mines faced the greatest competition for employment from iron and steel plants.⁵ Miners, steel

¹ Consequently, the zone increasingly lost significance and by 1939 accounted for only 6 percent of the Ruhr's population. Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.10, table 4.

² Industrial employment % includes Ruhr Zone. Ibid. p.104, table 42.

³ Ibid., p.108, table 44.

⁴ Ibid., p.94, table 38 ('Handel und Verkehr' and 'öffentl. und private Dienstleistungen').

⁵ Ibid., p.104, table 42. In 1939 there were 126,500 employees in the mining industry in the Ruhr and Hellweg area and 94,500 in iron and steel. Elsewhere the ratio was far more heavily weighted towards the mines. The close proximity of steel plants and mines was particularly marked in Duisburg and Dortmund.

men and other workers frequently lived side by side¹. The close proximity of different occupational groups reflected the fact that most pits were situated in the middle of towns.

To the north of the Hellweg lies the Emscher Zone, which in the 1930's housed a little over one third of the overall Ruhr population. Here the mines were newer, bigger and deeper than those of the Hellweg. Built between 1860 and 1910 they transformed what had been an almost exclusively agricultural area into one which, by the 1930's, was almost as densely populated as the Hellweg.² Unlike the older, more orderly urbanisation further south, the dramatic growth of the Emscher towns produced a chain of sprawling, disorganised conurbations, lacking clear centres or borders.³ Some even lost their civic identity, becoming northern suburbs of Duisburg, Essen, Bochum or Dortmund. They lacked the differentiated employment structures of more established towns so that the dominance of mining was much greater than in the Hellweg Zone. In 1939, 94,000 out of the 376,000 citizens in full time employment were to be found in the mining industry.⁴ Taking industrial employment on its own, mining's share rises to over two fifths.⁵

Further north still we enter the Lippe Zone, again named after the river which runs through it. In 1939, it accounted for almost a quarter of the total territory of the Ruhr but only 8 percent of its population and 12 percent of its miners.⁶

¹ See Helmut Klages, *Der Nachbarschaftsgedanke und die nachbarliche Wirklichkeit in der Großstadt*, Cologne and Opladen 1958, p.118ff. for a detailed description of occupational background in three Dortmund housing estates.

² Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.10, table 5. The northern part of the Emscher area, connecting Hamborn, Oberhausen and Recklinghausen, was much less urbanised than the south.

³ Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, *Leben vor Ort. Ruhrbergleute und Ruhrbergbau 1889 - 1919*, Munich 1983, p.30ff; Lutz Niehammer, *Umständliche Erläuterung der seelischen Störung eines Communalbaumeisters in Preußens größtem Industriedorf oder: Die Unfähigkeit zur Stadtentwicklung*, Frankfurt a.M. 1979.

⁴ Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.92, table 37 and p.104, table 42.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.106, table 43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.10, table 4 and p.108, table 44.

Much of the area's potential and in particular its deep-lying coal remained to be exploited. Over 12 percent of the gainfully employed population was still engaged in agriculture; twenty years later this had fallen below 4 percent.¹ The carbo-chemical industry, which was later to play such an important role in the area, was then in its infancy.² Few mines were much more than 30 years old and a number came into full operation only in the post- 1945 period³ so that, by 1961, the Zone's share of mining employment in the Ruhr had risen to over 16 percent.⁴ Much of the region still had a rural appearance and many of the mines were situated in predominantly agricultural settings, indeed in some cases miners continued to farm land while holding down a job in the mines.⁵ Yet, despite the rural character of parts of the region, the mines were already a vital part of the local economy, accounting in 1939 for 54 percent of industrial employment.⁶ They belonged to the most advanced and productive in the Ruhr and by 1948 were responsible for a considerable proportion of the Ruhr's coal production.⁷ In contrast to the Hellweg Zone, the mines faced relatively little competition for labour, although there were some signs in the 1930's that this was beginning to change.⁸

In many respects the mining area to the west of the Rhine resembled the Lippe Zone, with limited urbanisation, low population density and a relatively large

¹ Ibid., p.94, table 38.

² Ibid., p.106, table 43.

³ Eg. the Walsum mine.

⁴ Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.108, table 44.

⁵ Even in the 50's, this continued to apply in communities such as Oer-Erkenschwick to the north of Recklinghausen. IGBE Bezirk Ruhr Nord (ed.), *Jahre die wir nicht vergessen 1945 - 1950. Recklinghäuser Bergbau-Gewerkschaftler erinnern sich*, Recklinghausen no date, p.195ff.

⁶ Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.106, table 43 and my calculation based on p.92, table 92 & p.104, table 42.

⁷ Abelshäuser, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, p.19.

⁸ Michael Zimmermann, 'Ausbruchshoffnung. Junge Bergleute in den Dreißiger Jahren', in Lutz Niethammer (ed.), *Die Jahre weiß man nicht, wo man die heute hinsetzen soll". Faschismuserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet*, Berlin Bonn 1983, pp.97 - 132.

proportion of the population still engaged in agriculture in the 1930's. Mining was the chief source of industrial employment and in the Moers area it accounted for over 50 percent of all (ie not just industrial) employment.¹ As in the Lippe Zone, most of the coal field was developed only after the First World War and the mines were amongst the biggest and most modern in the Ruhr. Some of them are still in operation now, whereas in Duisburg, Essen and Bochum there is not a single working pit.

Ownership and Control of the mining industry

A few of the 148 Ruhr mines² operated as independent companies,³ but most were part of larger concerns and indeed the industry had long been characterised by heavy concentration. By 1913, over 70 percent of mines belonged to vertically or horizontally concentrated companies and the top nine concerns controlled one quarter of the Ruhr's coal production.⁴ Many of the vertical concentrations were mine-owning steel companies and by 1912 the *Hüttenzechen* produced one third of the Ruhr's coal.⁵ Foreign companies, too, had considerable shares in Ruhr collieries.⁶ During the 1920's further concentration took place in the industry, largely as a result of steel companies increasing their mining holdings.⁷ The most dramatic product of the concentration process was the fusion of many leading steel firms into the giant Vereinigte Stahlwerke (VSt). This was closely followed by the creation of the

¹ Steinberg, *Sozialräumliche Entwicklung*, appendix, map 17. There were local variations. In Rheinhausen, for instance, the metal industry was also a major employer.

² (In 1945). Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.132, table 46.

³ Eg. Gewerkschaft ver. Klosterbusch which operated the Klosterbusch mine in Herberde.

⁴ Werner Berg, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Deutschland und Großbritannien im Übergang zum 'organisierten Kapitalismus'. Unternehmer, Angestellte, Arbeiter und Staat im Steinkohlenbergbau des Ruhrgebietes und von Südwales 1850 - 1914*, Berlin 1984, p.80-81. Cf. Goldschmidt's calculation in *Ibid.*, note 81.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.80.

⁶ Abelshäuser, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, p.23.

⁷ Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.123

Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG (GBAG), a daughter concern controlling the VSt's mining interests. By 1936, the GBAG employed 50,000 people.¹ The only company even approaching the GBAG in size was the state-owned firm, Hibernia, the one significant exception to private ownership in the industry.

This general pattern of private ownership, heavy concentration and the dominance of steel firms was not fundamentally altered by Nazi rule. The same is true, with some qualifications, for another important feature of the mining industry, namely, the close cooperation and coordination between the mining companies (and also between mining and iron and steel companies). This cooperation was effected by the 'engmaschiges Verbandsnetz' (Bernd Faulenbach)² of industrial, marketing and employers' associations such as the *Rheinisch-Westfälisches Kohlensyndikat* (RWKS), the *Bergbauverein*, the *Zechenverband* and others. The most important organisation was probably the RWKS, created in 1893 and one of the most powerful cartels in Germany. It virtually eliminated open competition between mines, fixing coal prices and setting production quotas.³ Competition within the industry became a covert affair, taking place in board rooms and meetings where the production quotas were fixed. In the RWKS but also in general a very high premium was placed on discipline and unity amongst the individual mines and every effort was made to present a united front to the outside world. This also applied to the employers' approach to the labour movement. During the Weimar period wage negotiations took place not at company but at regional level with the *Zechenverband*

¹ Klaus Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich. Studien zur Sozialpolitik im Ruhrbergbau und zum sozialen Verhalten der Bergleute in den Jahren 1933 bis 1939*. Düsseldorf 1983, p.10.

² Bernd Faulenbach, 'Die Herren an der Ruhr. Zum Typus des Unternehmers in der Schwerindustrie', in Lutz Niethammer, Bodo Hombach et al (eds.), *"Die Menschen machen ihre Geschichte nicht aus freien Stücken, ab er sie machen sie selbst". Einladung zu einer Geschichte des Volkes in NRW*, Berlin Bonn 1985², pp.76-88, here p.85.

³ Berg, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p.92ff.

representing the mining companies. Even in the field of company social policy, the employers' associations made great efforts to ensure that no company got too much out of line with general practice.

The willingness of the Ruhr collieries to minimise internal competition and to formulate and adhere to common policies owed a lot to the character of the employers themselves. Werner Berg has described how the group identity of the employers emerged from the 1870's onwards.¹ The owner-entrepreneur was increasingly replaced by a new class of salaried director which by the First World War had become the dominant group among the employers.² A few extremely wealthy owners - the Thyssens and Krupps - continued to exert a great deal of influence in the Ruhr but they were the exception rather than the rule.³ The salaried *Unternehmer* were a very homogeneous group by virtue of both social and educational background. Most came from the families of higher civil servants and company directors.⁴ Virtually all studied at the mining academies or one of the other *Hochschulen* offering specialist mining studies and took the civil service exams for the State mining administration.⁵ The studies were lengthy and most students had turned thirty before qualifying as *Bergassessoren*, making them older and better qualified than most German employers, indeed than most employers anywhere, at that time.⁶ The common background and awareness of their own high qualifications encouraged a strong sense of identity and an *esprit de corps* which was further intensified by the association with the civil service. The absence of an established *haute bourgeoisie* in the Ruhr only strengthened the Ruhr employers' consciousness of

¹ Ibid., p.370ff.

² Ibid., p.376ff.

³ Faulenbach, 'Die Herren an der Ruhr', p.85.

⁴ Ibid., p.86 and Berg, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p.382.

⁵ Ibid., p.378ff, esp. p.381.

⁶ Ibid.

being a group apart. This group identity contributed to their willingness to promote common rather than just company interests, an orientation which received a further boost from the ideological content of their education, in which economic activity was presented as a patriotic service.¹

Neither this tradition nor the cartels and associations in which it found expression were adversely affected by the Nazi seizure of power. Of all the mining organisations, only the *Zechenverband* did not survive into the Nazi era; the impact of its dissolution was in any case small since its social-policy functions and personnel were taken over by the *Bergbauverein*.² The former Mining section (*Fachgruppe Bergbau*) of the Weimar Republic's central employers' association, the *Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie*, became, virtually unchanged, the *Wirtschaftsgruppe Bergbau* in the new *Reichsgruppe Industrie*.³ In the course of the 1930's and particularly during wartime, it is true that state controls led to ever greater restrictions on the industry's freedom of action.⁴ The *Wirtschaftsgruppe* was increasingly forced to be the executor of state decisions rather than the representative of the mining employers. But this only strengthened the organisation vis à vis the collieries since corporate decisions were now reinforced by state authority. As the post-war period was to reveal, the long-term influence of the mining associations and the cohesion and discipline of the industry had not been impaired. Indeed many of the industry's leading lights in the Nazi era returned (after a brief hiatus) to the top in the late 1940's and the 1950's.⁵

¹ On all this see *Ibid.*

² Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, p.35ff.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.265-272.

⁵ For a powerful illustration of mining's corporate identity and discipline in the post-war period see Werner Abelshäuser, 'Kohle und Marktwirtschaft. Ludwig Erhards Konflikt mit dem Unternehmensverband Ruhrbergbau am Vorabend der Kohlenkrise', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1985, 33,3, pp.489-546.

Productivity and profitability

Before looking at general trends, it should be noted that the Ruhr mines were very diverse. Taking the region as a whole, average pit size was 2,000 men with an annual production approaching the 1 million ton mark.¹ Yet some mines employed only a few hundred men and produced under 200,000 tons of coal a year,² while the top producers of the 1930's brought around 3 1/2 million tons to the surface annually and employed 5,000-6,000 men.³ Profitability varied enormously, not only because of the differences in productivity, but also because of the types of coal produced. Some mines, notably those in the Ruhr zone, produced anthracitic coals, unsuitable for coking, and were therefore unable to benefit from the lucrative business of supplying the steel companies.⁴

During the 1920's came the first signs that shifts in the world energy economy were undermining Ruhr mining's profitability.⁵ The industry was increasingly forced to export at a loss in order to be able to compete with cheaper British and American coal.⁶ If proper allowance is made for depreciation, it can be seen that even in Weimar's boom years 1925 - 1929 the mines were not working profitably.⁷ Instead of reducing output and concentrating on the more profitable mines further north, the industry introduced a rapid programme of rationalisation. In a few short years, coal-cutting by hand was replaced by the pneumatic pick and the older methods of working made way for long-wall

¹ Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.132, table 46, figures for 1938.

² For instance the VEW mine 'Caroline' in Holzwickede was in 1938 producing 143,000t of coal a year. Wilhelm und Gertrude Hermann, *Die alten Zechen an der Ruhr*, Königstein im Taunus 1982, p.111.

³ The leaders in the 1938 league table were the Zollverein mine with 3,564,000t and Prosper with 3,376,000t. Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.183.

⁴ Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, p.10.

⁵ See John Gillingham, *Industry and politics in the Third Reich*, London 1985, pp.5-31

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, p.17.

mining. It is questionable whether rationalisation on this scale made economic sense and there is little doubt that in the absence of a coal cartel many of the smaller producers would have gone to the wall.¹

During the 1930's, the rearmaments boom brought a revival of the industry's fortunes. Overall, 1939 was the industry's most productive year: more coal was brought to the surface in the Ruhr than in any year either before or since.² Production held up well until 1944, when it fell by about 15 percent.³ In January and February 1945, it was still running at about half the 1939 levels and only collapsed in March as an increasing part of the Ruhr came under occupation.⁴

In fact, however, the Ruhr mines had not fared as well in war and the armaments boom preceding it as might appear. True, the fall off in production from 1944 onwards was less a function of bomb destruction than of disruption of supplies. The mines had proved difficult bombing targets and sustained relatively little damage, although a number of cokeries and other overground installations had been destroyed. Many observers indeed believed that it would be a relatively easy task to restore the industry after the war.⁵ But this was an error. During the 1930's, the industry had suffered from a lack of investment. The Nazis did not wish to make big investments in mining, partly because they would only begin to pay themselves back after 15 or 20 years. To help industrial expansion in other sectors, the coal price was not allowed to rise, thus discouraging private investment in the mines.⁶ From 1938 onwards, no new shafts were sunk and the equipment and machinery grew steadily older and more obsolete. An even

¹ Rudolf Tschirbs, *Tarifpolitik im Ruhrbergbau 1918-1933*, Berlin 1986, p.339ff.

² Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.131, table 46.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *ZdKW*, 1, p.3.

⁵ Abelshauser, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, p.19ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.16ff.

more pressing issue by 1945 was the condition and structure of the workforce, a problem analysed in more detail below.

Thus mining entered the post-war era in a shaky condition and facing unknown market conditions. To remain at all competitive the industry would have to modernise - mechanise its production and sink large new mines. Even more immediate was the need to regenerate the workforce. And, though in the short term Europe would need all the home-produced coal it could get, the Ruhr mines were likely at some point in the future to re-encounter that problem of the 1920's, namely, that cheaper coal and other fuels encroached upon their market.

The emergence of the labour movement

Until the liberalisation of the 1850's and '60's, strikes were unknown in the industry. Prussia's miners were a privileged group, an estate with special rights and duties. They enjoyed, for instance, a system of sickness benefit when no other group of workers had one and the right to submit petitions and pleas to the royal mining authorities. Symbols of their status included a special uniform and their own particular oath to the king.¹ The state's withdrawal, the replacement of tradition by market forces and from 1850 onwards the massive influx of outsiders to the industry all transformed the situation. The first strikes occurred in the late 1850's and 1860's and the first major strike came in 1889. Two more large-scale stoppages, the Kaiserreich's most important disputes, followed in 1905 and 1912.²

The first lasting miners' union was founded in 1889, following the strike of that year. The Verband zur Wahrung und Förderung der Bergmännischen Interessen im Rheinland und Westfalen, reformed itself a year later to the Verband der

¹ Tenfelde, *Sozialgeschichte der Bergarbeiterschaft*, p.87ff; Hickey, *Workers in Imperial Germany*, p.170.

² Hickey, *Workers in Imperial Germany*, p.169ff.

deutschen Bergleute and was generally known as the Alter Verband. Almost from the beginning, disputes between socialists and religious groups undermined union unity. The Alter Verband became closely linked with the Social-Democratic party and a rival Christian union, the Gewerkverein, was formed in 1894. By 1912, these two unions represented 70,000 and 40,000 miners respectively. Almost as large as the Gewerkverein was the Zjednoczenie Zawodowe Polskie (ZZP), a union formed to represent the rapidly growing group of Polish-speaking German citizens from East Prussia who emigrated to the Ruhr. To complete the picture, the mining section of the liberal Hirsch-Duncker unions drew support from around 2,000 miners.¹

These divisions were hardly surprising given the heterogeneity and newness of the Ruhr labour force. Equally unsurprising was that the unions collectively were unable to win the support of more than a third of the miners. Though grass roots militancy was burgeoning and there was an increasing number of wildcat strikes, the inexperienced and highly mobile young workers who made up the bulk of the workforce were hard to win for slow and disciplined union growth. It was a vicious circle in which disunity and low membership condemned the union either to inactivity or to ineffective strike action which in turn made it hard to win support. All the industry's major strikes in the pre-1914 period ended in failure for the miners.²

Partly as a result of this situation, there was a growing gap between the leadership of the Alter Verband and the militant rank and file. The gap was also a function of the different mentalities of functionaries and ordinary miners. Composed largely of men with a long mining tradition behind them, the Alter Verband's leadership regarded the mass of recently settled miners as

¹ Ibid., p.226ff.

² Ibid., p.169ff.

wild and unreliable. The union was generally hostile to strike action and concentrated instead on boosting union membership.¹ It failed to give leadership to the explosion of unrest at the end of the First World War, to the socialisation movement of 1918/19, and indeed to the protest that followed the Kapp Putsch of 1920.² The unions' passivity cost it much support and for a brief period in the mid-1920's radical and anarchistic unions proved serious rivals for the Alter Verband and the Gewerkverein. From 1924 onwards, rapid rationalisation robbed local militancy of much of its ground. However, the unions' problems continued and unionisation remained well below 50 percent. In 1927, for example, just 14 percent of the miners were represented in the Alter Verband. In 1928, the Communists set up a rival union. Though the organisation itself was not very successful, the Communists were very effective in works council elections, in 1931 winning almost as many votes as the Alter Verband.³ Disunity and the gap between union leadership and grass roots remained endemic to the end of Weimar.

Labour policy and labour relations

The history of labour relations in mining up to 1933, is, with brief exceptions, the history of employer dominance. Against the weak and divided labour movement was ranged a group of employers with capital, coordination and *esprit de corps* perhaps unrivalled in Europe. The employers refused to recognise the unions and it was only the revolutionary events of 1918 that forced them to change their stance. For a brief period, labour was in the ascendant. Employers and unions instituted central wage negotiations and introduced an 8 hour working day. Though this was undoubtedly a major step forward, the

¹ Brüggeleier, *Leben vor Ort*, p.180ff.

² Mommsen, 'Die Bergarbeiterbewegung an der Ruhr 1918-1933', in Jürgen Reulecke (ed.), *Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung in Rheinland und Westfalen*, Wuppertal 1974, pp.275-314, here p.278.

³ Tschirbs, *Tarifpolitik*, p.399.

unions, by not mobilising the energy of the protest and strike movement, missed a great opportunity to achieve much more significant encroachments on employers power. The tide was soon to turn. Following the Ruhr Occupation of 1923 and the end of the inflation, the employers went on the offensive. Rationalisation was accompanied by massive redundancies and throughout the second half of the 1920's the mine-owners gave vent to a series of increasingly bitter attacks on the unions and the system of collective bargaining.¹

At company level, the employers' approach to labour was characterised by a mixture of authoritarianism and paternalism. The employers in the Ruhr mining industry were notorious for their ruthlessness in dealings with the miners. In part, they had simply maintained the authoritarian tradition of the pre-1851 period when the Prussian state had run the mining industry.² But, as Franz Brüggemeier has demonstrated, management's approach was also the function of their lack of direct control over the labour process in the mines. The existence in each mine of a large number of small faces, precluded any direct control over the men. Until the introduction of long-wall mining in the late 1920's and early 1930's, miners spent most of the day without any supervision. Consequently, mine managers felt it necessary to be very tough in their approach to the workforce.³ At lower levels of management, the pit deputies and overmen (*Steiger*) were particularly prone to this since they were under pressure to keep productivity up and wage costs down, yet were responsible for far too many faces and working points to oversee them properly.⁴ A semi-military, authoritarian spirit pervaded the entire industry.

¹ Tschirbs, *Tarifpolitik*, p.190ff and p.241ff; Bernd Weisbrod, 'Economic power and political stability reconsidered: heavy industry in Weimar Germany', *Social History*, 1979, 4, 2, 241-265.

² Tenfelde, *Sozialgeschichte der Bergarbeiterschaft*, p.273ff; Faulenbach, 'Die Herren an der Ruhr', p.86.

³ Brüggemeier, *Leben vor Ort.*, p.112ff.

⁴ *Ibid.* and Hickey, *Workers in Imperial Germany*, p.160.

At the same time there had always been a strong element of benevolent paternalism. Krupp was the earliest and most celebrated practitioner of extensive social policy but by the First World War virtually all mining companies had made considerable investments in social and welfare provisions, particularly in the construction of company housing.¹ By 1937, there were 162,567 mine-owned houses and apartments in the Ruhr.² As well as instilling loyalty to the company, many provisions (for instance, the 'good ladies' of the *Werksfürsorge* or the strict rules of behaviour on company estates) clearly aimed to 'civilise' and educate the miners, thus revealing the paternalistic way in which the employers regarded the workforce.³

Because of their relative weakness, the unions relied heavily on state support. During the First World War, it had been the state which in the interests of domestic peace and production had first prompted the employers to make some recognition of labour.⁴ In the Weimar era, the political climate and most of the governments were more favourably disposed towards labour than before. Directly and indirectly, the unions received considerable state support in collective bargaining.⁵ During the inflation, employers made agreements to wage rises conditional on government support for increases in the coal price, while in the second half of the 1920's, the unions were increasingly dependent on

¹ Hickey, *Workers in Imperial Germany*, p.51ff; Joseph Höffner, *Sozialpolitik im deutschen Bergbau*, Münster 1956, p.49ff.

² Josef Lang, 'Die geschichtliche und räumliche Entwicklung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaus im Ruhrgebiet', (Diss. Cologne, 1952), p.97.

³ Brüggemeier, *Leben vor Ort*, p.148ff; Theodor Terhorst, 'Zehnjährige Mitarbeit im Dienst der Mitbestimmung beim Hamborner Bergbau', (unpub. Ms., 1963), p.163; Faulenbach, 'Die Herren an der Ruhr', p.86; Hickey, *Workers in Imperial Germany*, p.65-69.

⁴ Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918*, Princeton 1966.

⁵ For a general account, see Nathan Reich, *Labour relations in republican Germany*, New York 1938.

the (legally binding) decisions of the state wage arbitration panel to achieve any improvements in wage levels.¹

Within the colliery too, the state's influence made itself apparent. The State mines inspectorate, composed of the *Berg-* and *Oberbergämter*, oversaw the industry and had special responsibilities in questions of safety and training. Impressive on paper, the inspectorate's powers were limited by shortage of staff and it tended in any case to sympathise strongly with the employers,² a sympathy which survived the fall of both Kaiserreich and Weimar Republic. Nevertheless, until the Second World War, when little attention was paid to safety rules,³ it represented an important check on employers' authority. In addition, the state introduced in the Weimar era a number of innovations giving employees more rights and reducing the scope for authoritarian paternalism. New works councils were created with considerable power. New housing legislation and selective subsidy policies weakened the ability and inclination of employers to use company housing as an instrument of coercion.⁴ A state unemployment benefit scheme was introduced, involving sizeable employer contributions.

The employers resented these incursions into what they regarded as their legitimate sphere of authority and resented too the costs which state social policy imposed upon them. They might have been more tolerant had it not been for the profit squeeze in the second half of the 1920's. Tensions grew further

¹ Tschirbs, *Tarifpolitik*, p.50ff and p.314ff.

² See for instance the position of the *Oberbergamt Dortmund* on training questions in Brüggemeier, *Leben vor Ort*, p.95ff.

³ Wolfgang Franz Werner, "*Bleib übrig*". *Deutsche Arbeiter in der nationalsozialistischen Kriegswirtschaft*, Düsseldorf 1983, p.241ff; '(Es)..besteht keine Veranlassung mehr die während des Krieges in der bergpolizeilichen Beaufsichtigung der Gruben eingetretenen Lockerungen beizubehalten', Archive of the *Oberbergamt Dortmund* (OBADA) I3063/649/45, *Oberbergamt Dortmund* to all *Bergämter*, 31.July 1945; OBADA I2004/2784/46, *Bergamt Bottrop* to *Oberbergamt Dortmund*, 12.12.1946.

⁴ Lang, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', p.86ff.

with the onset of the slump in 1929 and Ruhr industrialists were at the forefront of demands for a reversal of Weimar labour and social legislation.¹ Even before 1933, a number of Weimar's social and industrial policy innovations had been reversed. Nevertheless, they were to provide a model for the post-war period. State intervention in many aspects of labour policy resumed in the late 1940's where it had left off in the slump and, as will be seen, the union's influence in many areas of mining policy owed more to state support than to collective struggle.

With the advent of Nazi rule many of the rights and policies introduced in the Weimar era were removed. On the whole, the impact of the Nazis was to weaken the position of labour and to stimulate a return to the *Herr im Hause* approach on the part of the employers. The unions were forcibly dissolved and those Nazi organisations which, like the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, demanded more rights and social services for employees were largely unsuccessful in persuading employers to adopt their suggestions.² In any case the *Arbeitsfront* was at best a half-hearted advocate of workers rights. The approach of war and particularly the adoption of total war policies in the early 40's, saw further drastic restrictions on the freedom of the miners. The state became increasingly involved in industrial discipline and backed up the authority of the managers with the *Gestapo* and the *Arbeitserziehungslager*.³ Nevertheless, the employers did not have it all their way. Under the Nazis, the state administration played an ever greater part in determining industrial policy. Labour supply was state controlled and employers required official permission for dismissals. Wages

¹ Weisbrod, 'Economic power and political stability', *passim*.

² Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, *passim*; Michael Zimmermann, "Betriebsgemeinschaft" - der unterdrückte Konflikt. Aus den Protokollen des Vertrauensrats der *Zeche Friedrich der Große*, in Niethammer, Hombach et al (eds), "Die Menschen machen ihre Geschichte", pp.171-174.

³ Werner, "Bleib übrig", p.26ff, p.77ff, p.171ff and p.318ff.

were fixed by the *Treuhänder der Arbeit*. Gradually, the industry found its own interests subordinated to other state priorities.¹

For both labour and employers, the fascist and war-time experience had important implications for future industrial relations. The experience of 1933 produced amongst German union leaders recognition that the union movement could not afford to be divided. Almost from the first day of peace it was clear that there would no longer be a series of competing religious and politically affiliated unions.² And what of the employers? Much as they found state interference irksome, employers had made little resistance to the more unpleasant aspects of Nazi rule, and had made willing use of the Gestapo and the labour correction camps.³ Foreign conscripts had received the sharpest treatment and the employers' racism had been exposed by the fact that that treatment varied according to the conscripts' nationality. Historical research has made clear that these measures were not being foisted by outsiders onto an unwilling industry, as the mine-owners themselves liked to suggest in later years.⁴ On the other hand, few employers were convinced Nazis and many aspects of National-Socialist ideology left the industry unmoved.⁵ For German employers, generally, the signs of approaching defeat were a signal to begin a covert rapprochement with labour representatives. There was a growing

¹ Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich* . *passim* .

² Hartmut Pietsch, *Militärreglerung, Bürokratie und Sozialisierung. Zur Entwicklung des politischen Systems in den Städten des Ruhrgebietes 1945-1948* . Duisburg 1978, p.80.

³ Werner, "Bleib übrig". , p.77ff and especially p.171ff.

⁴ Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden. Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941 - 1945* . Stuttgart 1978, p.268-284, esp. p.280ff; Ulrich Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter. Politik und Praxis des "Ausländer-Einsatzes" in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches*, Berlin Bonn 1985, p.220ff and p.273ff.

⁵ This is nicely captured in Zimmermann, "'Betriebsgemeinschaft'", p.171ff.

acceptance that any post-war settlement would have to involve extensive labour recognition.¹

However, in the closing weeks of the war, that settlement was still *Zukunftsmusik*. All Germans were very uncertain what the economy in general or mining in particular would look like in future. Above all it was not clear what or who from the industry would survive the Allied takeover. Senior mining personnel, nervous of retribution from miners, foreign conscript labour and the approaching Allied troops, now slipped away in their Mercedes to country hide-outs, preferring to await events from a distance.²

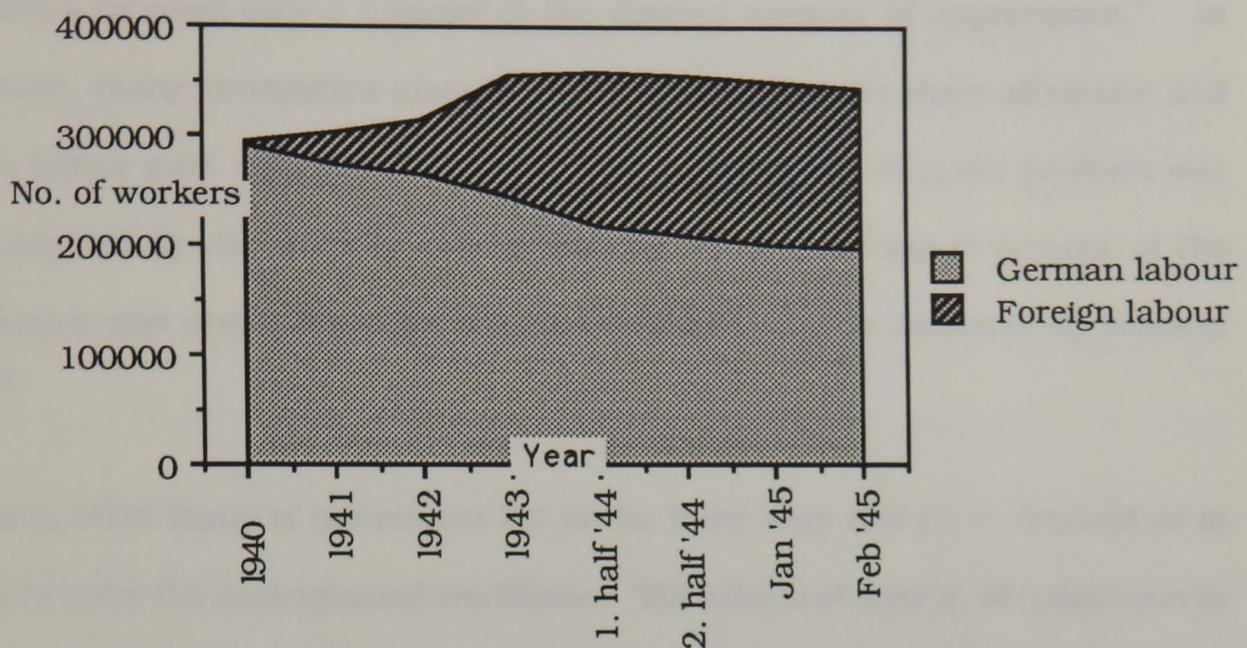
2: Workforce regeneration: problems and strategies

The gaps in the workforce

The most pressing problem facing any attempt to revive coal production in 1945 was the condition and structure of the workforce. During the war, the Germans had made increasing recourse to foreign conscript labour (see fig. 1) as ever more German miners were called up to the armed forces. By the beginning of 1945, 43 percent of the underground workforce consisted of foreigners, most of them Russian prisoners of war. When, between February and April 1945, these men were removed or liberated from the mines, the workforce was thus left almost 50 percent under strength.

¹ See Gunther Mai, "Warum steht der deutsche Arbeiter zu Hitler?" Zur Rolle der Deutschen Arbeitsfront im Herrschaftssystem des Dritten Reiches', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 1986, 12, 2, pp.212-234, esp.232.

² A graphic description of senior management's quiet disappearance is to be found in 'Die kriegerischen Ereignissen in den März-April Tagen 1945 auf der Zeche Brassert, Marl', in Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, Dortmund (WWA) F35: 3767.

Fig 1: Composition of mining workforce (excluding auxilliary plants) 1940-45¹

The workforce was also becoming overaged. The ageing process had started during the 1920's, when as part of its rationalisation programme the industry had made little attempt to recruit new labour. At first, the impact had been not unfavourable since in the early 1920's the workforce had been rather on the youthful side, with over 50 percent of 30 years of age or less.² In the mid-1930's, the age structure, with almost half the workforce in the peak age range of 30-45, was very productive and output per head was higher in 1937 than ever before.³ It was nevertheless clear that there were too few youngsters in the industry to maintain this in the future, yet the mines, still recovering from the depression, were slow to respond and began only in the mid-'30's to recruit apprentices in

¹ Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Konjunkturforschung (ed.), *Die Ursachen der niedrigen Förderung im Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit Kriegsende*, Essen 1946, pp.1-2, in Archive of the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, Düsseldorf (DGBA), File 'Ruhrprobleme 1945/6'.

² My summation from 1926 figures in table 'Altersgliederung der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrbergbau. % der Belegschaft', in Oberbergamt Dortmund (OBAD) (ed.), *Jahresbericht für den Oberbergamtsbezirk Dortmund 1958*, Dortmund 1959.

³ My summation from Hans Heinrich Bischoff, 'Die Altersgliederung der Arbeiter im Steinkohlenbergbau', *Glückauf*, 1952, 88, 41/41, pp.1009-1012, here p.1012, table 5; Wiel, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.131f, table 46.

earnest.¹ They were too late. Competition from the Wehrmacht and the metal industries drew potential recruits away from the mines and in 1939 the collieries received only a quarter of the desired number of apprentices.² In addition, many youngsters already in the pits left for the more attractive and often better paid employment elsewhere.³ During the war, the problem was exacerbated by the military call-up and by 1944 less than 9 percent of the workforce was under 30, while almost two thirds were in excess of 40 years of age.⁴

Thus in 1945 many of the miners left in the Ruhr were due for retirement or at least to leave the underground workforce. The effects of ageing, of reductions in the quality and quantity of food available and of exhaustion through overwork were manifest in the productivity levels which by 1944 had fallen almost 25 percent from their peak in the 1930's.⁵ Clearly, a major regeneration and rejuvenation of the workforce would be required after the war.

The emergence of a strategy

The 1930's brought home to many mines that they faced a fundamental problem on the labour market. At the prices they were allowed to charge, they could not afford to pay the wages necessary to win adequate new labour and create a stable workforce. One reason for this was that mining was seen in the Ruhr as a low status occupation. To be seen as a miner was to be seen to have failed. For

¹ In 1934, for example, the under-20 group accounted for only 8 1/2% of the workforce. My summation from the table 'Altersgliederung der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrbergbau. % der Belegschaft', in OBAD (ed.) *Jahrbuch 1958*; Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, p.135.

² Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, p.137.

³ *Ibid.*, p.122ff.

⁴ My summation from the table 'Altersgliederung der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrbergbau. % der Belegschaft', in OBAD (ed.) *Jahrbuch 1958*. It is not made explicitly clear, but these figures probably apply only to the German workers.

⁵ Werner, "*Bleib übrig*", p.301. (figures for underground workers only); analysis of ill-health and accidents p.300ff.

instance, young miners from the Ruhr would go to elaborate lengths to conceal their profession - because that was the only way to get the girls:¹

Wir Jungen kriegten natürlich mit, daß die Rüstungsindustrie aufgebaut wurde. Und das war für uns junge Burschen: Weg vom Pütt! - Wenn wir damals schon mal nach den Mädchen guckten, haben wir nicht gesagt: 'Wir sind vom Pütt', sondern 'Ja, ja, wir arbeiten dahinten auf Montage.' Die ersten Fragen der Mädchen waren doch immer: 'Hast du Arbeit?' und, 'Was tust du?' Pütt - da wollten sie nichts mit zu tun haben. Allein deswegen wollten viele von uns weg.

Heinrich Husmann too, in his ethnographical study of workers in Hamborn, noted the tendency to look down on the miner, a fact which he attributed to the past influx of 'culturally disadvantaged' people into the profession.² Engineering, on the other hand, benefited from that fascination with technology that characterised young Germans in the 1930's. As a Wirtschaftsgruppe Bergbau study noted in 1942, every six year old knew the exact technical details of every plane, car and radio produced in Germany but the difference between hard coal and lignite was a closed book even to most sixty-year-olds.³

To compensate for these factors, mining's wages had to be well ahead of their competitors. Yet this was impossible to achieve. According to the GBAG, mining and steel employees earned about the same in 1933-34, but by 1939, earnings in the blast furnaces lay between 10 percent and 75 percent higher than the take-home pay of the underground miner.⁴ Mining could not keep up. For one thing, the steel works' productivity was improving much faster than mining's; for another, wages were a much smaller part of their total expenditure.

The industry looked to the state for support but in the 1930's little help was forthcoming. On the contrary, the mines found themselves compelled to foot

¹ Miner Oskar Wolfram in Michael Zimmermann, 'Ausbruchshoffnungen', p.102.

² Heinrich Husmann, 'Lebensformen und ihr Wandel beim Arbeiter in Hamborn', (Dissertation, Mainz University, 1952), p.14.

³ Cited in Hanns W. Brose, *Eine Gemeinschaftswerbung zur Gewinnung von Nachwuchs für den Bergbau*, Sonderdruck of the journal *Die Werbung*, July 1950.

⁴ Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, p.146.

the bill for an expensive overtime and incentive scheme known as the Hermann Göring Verordnung.¹ During the war, it is true, the state agreed to shoulder some of the burden for the miners' health insurance and at the same time considerably improved the benefits.² Nevertheless there was little doubt that these measures, on their own, could not compensate for mining's unattractiveness.

Thus mining employers began to give thought to ways in which they might improve the situation without requiring major injections of resources. During the war, some employers seem to have considered maintaining permanent colonies of conscript labour who would be kept within specially created ghettos. Wilhelm Tengemann from the Hibernia company wrote in 1943 that it might be necessary to absorb large numbers of foreign labourers after the war. They should be accommodated 'in geschlossenen, abseitsgelegenen Siedlungsgemeinschaften...und zwar so, daß sich dort ihr Leben ihrer Eigenart, ihrer Mentalität und ihrem Volkscharakter entsprechend abwickeln kann'.³ By creating such ghettos, argued Tengemann, one could avoid 'biologische Schäden am Erbgut des deutschen Volkes' while maintaining a permanent presence of racially inferior foreigners.

This was an exceptional view and Tengemann himself did not seem to regard the prospect with any enthusiasm. Most employers looked forward to dispensing with foreign labour as soon as possible. Within the Bezirksgruppe and in a number of forward-looking collieries, two main strategies were developed, both of which attempted to enhance mining's status and thus to increase the 'immaterial gratification' associated with mining work.

¹ Ibid., p.243ff.

² Zimmermann, 'Ausbruchshoffnungen', p.121.

³ Bergbau-Archiv, Bochum (BBA) 10, 28. Tengemann, 'Erfahrungen aus dem Arbeitseinsatz der Fremdvölkischen im Ruhrbergbau', 1.5.1943.

One was to create a new, officially recognised apprenticeship which would restore mining's status, increase recruitment and create a new core of loyal, stable and highly qualified young workers. This was not a new idea, although the commitment to it from the late 1930's onwards was new. Ever since the First World War, there had been consideration of ways of improving the training in mining. A government commission had been set up in 1920, amongst other things, to look into this question. 1921 had seen the founding of what later became the school for mining apprentices (bergmännische Berufsschule). In the mid-1920's, the beginnings of rationalisation and the interest created by the Deutsche Institut für technische Arbeitserziehung in training matters had added a further stimulus.¹ In 1926, the qualifications necessary for miners to become 'Hauer' (men capable of working independently at the various skilled jobs underground) were formalised and an exam instituted.² A few mines also began preparing their juvenile recruits for underground work, although training here was very perfunctory.

One reason for taking juvenile training more seriously in the 1930's was that the nature of mining work was changing. So long as the miners had still been working in small teams, the mines had been able to rely on the older men to impart their skills to newer recruits.³ With the advance of long-wall mining in the early 1930's, the mines found themselves under greater pressure to institute formal training. Not only would safety and productivity depend on it, but it might well facilitate mechanisation too.

However, the real logic to the new emphasis on training lay elsewhere. For some time, as Rudolf Schwenger observed in a 1932 study on social policy in mining,

¹ OBADA I6300, GMSO, Circular No. 138, November 1945, annex 2: 'Gesichtspunkte für die Fortführung der systematischen Berufsausbildung im Ruhrbergbau'.

² Ibid.

³ See Hickey, *Workers in Imperial Germany*, p.110.

there had been the hope that what the employers regarded as the unstable and unreliable workforce of the 1920's could be transformed through training into a permanent, responsible and cooperative one.¹ The more the industry faced recruitment and wastage problems in the 1930's, the more this goal of workforce stability became the employers' dominant consideration. It was the need to win and hold on to labour, rather than any immediate dictates of production itself, which galvanised the industry to go beyond the rather haphazard approach to juvenile training of the 1920's and move towards a formal apprenticeship. The hope was that apprenticeships would have a two-fold effect. On the one hand, they would convince parents and youngsters, 'daß im Bergbau eine qualitativ ebenso wertvolle Ausbildung vermittelt wird wie in der übrigen Industrie'.² On the other hand they would enable the employers to bring to bear 'erziehliche Einflüsse...die auf die Schaffung einer verantwortungsbewußten Arbeiterschaft abgestellt sind'.³

Finally, in 1941, the mining apprenticeship was codified and received official recognition. Youngsters entering the mines would receive a three year training programme giving them a comprehensive introduction to mining work. At the end of the apprenticeship, the young miners qualified as 'Knappen'. From the very beginning, however, there was something artificial about the concept.⁴ Only after three years working underground - ie *following* qualification as Knappe - could they take the Hauer exam, and only then did they become qualified to work independently and to receive the top wage rates. Miners who entered the industry as unskilled adults could become Hauer just as quickly as

¹ Cited in OBADA I6300, GMSO, Circular No. 138, November 1945, annex 2. See also Büttchereit, 'Probleme des bergmännischen Bildungswesens', *Mitteilungen der WBK*, 1957, 5, pp.5-10.

² OBADA I6300, GMSO, Circular No. 138, November 1945, annex 2.

³ Schwenger, *Die betriebliche Sozialpolitik*, cited in *Ibid*.

⁴ Büttchereit, 'Probleme des bergmännischen Bildungswesens', *passim*.

the Knappen. This was clear evidence that the specific set of skills imparted by the apprenticeship was not very significant. Its real logic lay in its other functions - above all the goal of binding the youngster to his occupation.¹

The mines hoped that they could now win apprentices from groups previously unwilling to send their offspring to the mines. Consequently, a number of mines set about constructing special apprentice hostels to accommodate outsiders to the Ruhr.² By 1942, several of these were in existence and were already being featured in the industry's recruitment campaign.³ The growing shortage of building materials, the Wehrmacht's claims on young able-bodied Germans and the need to accommodate increasing numbers of foreign conscripts forced the mines to halt the construction programme and a number of the hostels were given over to foreign workers.⁴ Nevertheless, the apprentice strategy was ready and waiting, as the speed with which it was revived after the war was to demonstrate.

The other major 'immaterial' strategy developed before and during the war was the use of modern advertising methods to alter the way the miner was perceived both inside and outside the industry. In 1941, the Wirtschaftsgruppe Bergbau began to design a massive recruitment and advertising campaign to be implemented in the post-war period. A special team including Hanns W. Brose and Karl Bax prepared the groundwork and produced 12 test advertisements that were to be just a small part of the envisaged post-war campaign.⁵ Readers of the journal 'NS-Frauenwarte', for instance, were treated to the first fruits of this

¹ Ibid. and Zimmermann, 'Ausbruchshoffnungen', p.121.

² Hans-Georg Erzmonet, 'Was tut der Ruhrbergbau für seinen Nachwuchs?', *Bergbau*, 1956, 7, pp.168-175, here p.172

³ Zimmermann, 'Ausbruchshoffnungen', p.114.

⁴ Erzmonet, 'Was tut der Ruhrbergbau', p.172.

⁵ Brose, 'Eine Gemeinschaftswerbung', *passim*.

work with an article entitled "Der Bergmann...ein Facharbeiter".¹ The main work was to take place after the war, however, when such journal articles would be complemented by films, exhibitions, propaganda within the mines, letter campaigns to schools and other means.²

Thus, without one being able to say that there was a precise and coordinated plan, a number of policies were crystallising in the the 1941-42 period as to how mining could be rebuilt and reshaped in the post-war period. These policies aimed both at solving the labour shortage and at creating a new attitude of loyalty amongst the miners, the majority of whom continued to be seen, in one way or another, as unreliable.³

As it turned out, the massive gaps in the workforce left behind by conscript labour, the urgency of coal demand and the fact that post-war coal policy was decided by Military Government all meant that these strategies could not be implemented immediately. However, as time went on, they rose to the surface again and were to play a major role in employers' attempts to regenerate the colliery labour-forces.

¹ Zimmermann, 'Ausbruchshoffnungen', p.114.

² Brose, 'Eine Gemeinschaftswerbung', *passim*.

³ *Ibid.*

Chapter 2: Coercion and constraint. Military Government and the regeneration of the Ruhr mines 1945-46

1: The failure to control labour

Priority for coal

As the war drew to a close, there was no doubt in the Allies' minds about the importance of Ruhr coal and from the start there was agreement that Ruhr coal production should be maximised in the short term.¹ When the US 9th Army advanced into the Ruhr in March 1945, the solid fuels section, G4, of SHAEF moved in directly behind it and, even before all the cities in the area had been occupied, began to establish control over the mines in the area.² The urgency of increasing coal production was underlined in June when the findings of the Potter/Hyndley report were submitted. The report, the outcome of a joint Anglo-American mission to countries in north-western Europe, argued that economic collapse and serious disorder would result throughout the area unless it received immediate and sizeable injections of German coal.³ In July, American and British commanders in Germany received directives to the effect that Germany should export 10 million tons of coal up to December 1945 and a further 15 million tons in the first four months of 1946.⁴

¹ PRO FO 942, 178, Economic and Industrial Planning Staff (EIPS), 'The German coal industry. Report of the working party' (September 1944); Werner Milert, 'Die verschenkte Kontrolle. Bestimmungsgründe und Grundzüge der britischen Kohlenpolitik im Ruhrbergbau 1945 - 1948', in Petzina and Euchner (eds.), *Wirtschaftspolitik*, pp.105-119, here p.105.

² The Concordia mines, for instance, were taken over by the Rhine Coal Control before the whole of Oberhausen had been occupied. See WWA F26 377, Rheinische Kohlenkontrolle I, Ruhrkohlenbezirk, HQ, Nr.1 Coal District, Hamborn to General Directors, 9.4.1945; Pietsch, *Militärregierung*, p.5.

³ PRO FO 942, 179, Combined Production and Resources Board. London Coal Committee, 'The coal situation in North West Europe. Report by the Potter/Hyndley Mission to North West Europe', June 1945.

⁴ WWA S22 (OMGUS) AG 45-46/103/1, Joint Chiefs of Staff to US Forces Berlin, 26.7.1945; Robertson to Clay, 21.9.1945.

Early successes

This urgency notwithstanding, the first few confused weeks of occupation saw little coal being moved from the mines, largely through lack of transport facilities. The SHAEF team concentrated on setting up an administrative body, the Ruhr Coal Control, to supervise the mines, on restarting production and on collecting statistical data to determine the manpower and material necessary for increased production. This interregnum continued until the British took over in July, and absorbed the Ruhr Coal Control into their own organisation, the North German Coal Control (NGCC).¹

The NGCC could not help but recognise that improving the manpower situation was the key to increasing coal production. In April 1945, the underground workforce had fallen as low as 127,525 men, little more than half the size of 1938.² Accordingly, measures were begun immediately to replenish the depleted workforce. The NGCC's manpower target was 320,000 miners³, roughly equivalent to the pre-war figure, and designed to attain the 1938 production level of around 400,000t a day.⁴

Initially the NGCC devoted its energies to returning former miners to the industry. This meant, among other things, combatting widespread absenteeism. Large numbers of miners had, in the first weeks after the war, failed to report for work, preferring to concentrate on repairing their homes or make foraging trips for food. By mid-July over a third of the available workforce was not attending work. From the beginning of August onwards the NGCC issued 'Orders to attend

¹ WWA S22 BICO BISEC 11/103/2/22, Report by William Strang and William Thorpe to the governments of the US and UK, September 1947, Appendix: 'Review of Hard Coal Production in the Ruhr area since the capitulation'.

² *ZdKW*, 1, p.20.

³ Above and below ground.

⁴ PRO FO 1005, 345, NGCC Monthly Report No.2. (September 1945).

work' and by November absenteeism had dropped from 36 to 17.2 percent.¹ In addition to these measures, the manpower authorities screened German prisoners of war in the British zone for former miners and these were rapidly released. By the end of August, 'Operation Coal-scuttle', as it was called, had returned 35,000 POW miners to the pits.² Furthermore the workforce registers of the collieries, the labour exchanges and the Ruhr *Knappschaft*, (the Miners' Insurance Association) were used to trace men with mining experience who had taken on other employment. Labour Supply Directive No.2 ruled that all former miners, without exception, were to be returned to the pits. In one week in August alone, over 1100 ex miners were directed back to the industry.³ The result of these measures was a steady rise in employment and output. Between April and October, underground employment increased from 127,525 to 157,415, while monthly coal production jumped from 268,000t to 3,607,000t.⁴

The manpower problem

Until September 1945, the majority of the men brought back to the mines were Ruhr miners happy or, at least, not too unwilling to return to their former employment. Neither the administrative abilities nor the coherence of British recruiting policy had been put to the test. As the flow of former Ruhr miners began appreciably to slow down towards the end of August 1945, the British authorities were under pressure to find a new source of manpower.⁵

¹ PRO FO 1005, 345, NGCC Monthly Progress Reports 2 - 4; PRO FO 1005, 1819, Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions in the Ruhr', Lübbecke 25.9.1945.

² PRO FO 942, 183, (EIPS/97/146^B), Economic Sub-Commission (ECOSC), CCG(BE), 'Brief for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Part 1: Hard Coal Production in the British Occupied Zone of Germany', 8.4.1946.

³ PRO FO 1005, 1824, Labour Supply Directive No.2, 21. August 1945; Labour Supply Directive No. 3, 18. Sept. 1945; Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions', op.cit.

⁴ *ZdKW*, 1.p.20 & p.3.

⁵ Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions', op.cit.

This would not be a simple task. Despite the huge migrations of refugees and expellees, there was no obvious and immediately accessible reservoir of suitable labour for the mines. Above all, the supply of experienced men was drying up, so that recourse would have to be had to inexperienced men, or 'green labour' in official parlance.¹ In addition a significant proportion of the population in working age was unfit for heavy labour by virtue of age, exhaustion or injury. According to one estimate, three quarters of male workers aged between 18 and 45 were underweight or in poor physical condition.² When a census was taken in 1947, it was established that only a third of those available for work in the British Zone were fit for heavy labour.³

Then there was the problem that, despite the depressed economy, few workers were coming on to the labour market because the Reichsmark's loss of value encouraged a lot of economically meaningless employment.⁴ Normal relationships between wages and production figures did not apply. Many employers reimbursed their workforce in kind, leaving the employees to bargain with the goods on the black market. Not being under financial pressure to streamline the workforce, big industrial companies were 'hoarding' their workers in the hope of being able to restart production in the foreseeable future. Exact figures are not available but in mid-1947, when a similar labour market situation still prevailed, unemployment lay at 274,000 for the British zone, or just 3 percent of the employed workforce, despite the fact that industrial production in the same geographical area was barely more than one third of the

¹ Ibid.

² PRO FO1005, 1947, 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946. Visit of Russian, French and US experts to the Ruhr.', August 1946. See especially minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 6 August, 1946, remarks by August Halbfell.

³ BAK Z40, 308, ZAA, 'Das Arbeitspotential in der britischen Zone', October 1947.

⁴ Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions', op.cit.

1936 level.¹ Therefore, the authorities might well be forced to screen workers in other employment and to transfer those who were engaged in inessential activity to the mines. Although an apparatus was being developed to do this in the form of Labour Priority Boards, it would be a complex and time-consuming task.²

A further difficulty was that the bulk of the usable and inessentially employed labour was not in the locality but in rural areas. This was the result of a combination of wartime evacuations, the official direction of refugees and expellees to rural areas of intact housing and the voluntary migration of many city dwellers. Obtaining this labour would raise transportation problems and the housing difficulties would be almost insuperable since the authorities were in any case engaged in a 'race against time' to provide accommodation for the existing Ruhr population before winter set in.³

The most serious problem, however, was that mining work, unattractive at the best of times, offered very little at the end of 1945. During the Third Reich miners' wages had dropped badly relative to other important industrial groups and the decline in the miner's position was not made up after the end of the war. Indeed, with the termination soon after the capitulation of the Goering decree (originally introduced in 1939), the miners suffered a 10 percent cut in their monthly pay.⁴ Another blow in 1945 was the cut in pensions. During the war, the State had helped the industry by funding a major part of the contributions to the miners' health and old-age insurance organisation, the *Knappschaft*. The British did not feel in a position to continue this support and as a result the

¹ ZAA, 'Das Arbeitspotential in der britischen Zone', op.cit.

² Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions', op.cit.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, p.146 & 244ff; Milert, 'Die verschenkte Kontrolle', p.112.

Knappschaft was forced to make large cuts in the levels of miners' pensions, eliminating one, the 'Bergmannssold', altogether.¹ It was true that miners, like other workers engaged in heavy labour, still received higher rations than most groups, but in practice they suffered from the food shortages that affected most urban areas. Many miners or their families saw themselves compelled to go on foraging trips into the country to obtain food.² It would take a major improvement in working conditions and incentives to induce new recruits to sign on at the Ruhr mines.³

Lost directions

These were difficult problems, yet they were surely not insuperable. There was no true scarcity of labour but rather a maldistribution of human and other resources. To right this maldistribution, the British had two options at their disposal. They could channel towards the mining community the resources (foodstuffs, consumer goods and building materials) that would ensure a plentiful supply of volunteers to the mines; or they could compel men to enter the pits. The British chose the second solution and in the autumn of 1945, the British Control Commission's Manpower Division, on whom the job of finding new labour devolved, set the administrative wheels in motion to detect usable labour and to direct, that is, coerce, it to the mines.

Since a task of this size could not be undertaken by the British alone, the Division's main role was to coordinate, direct and monitor the activity of German officials. The actual detection and directions were largely carried out

¹ Ibid.

² *Hochlarmarker Lesebuch. Kohle war nicht alles. 100 Jahre Ruhrgebietsgeschichte*, Oberhausen 1981, p.200ff.

³ Many of those later directed to the mines complained that they had suffered both a cut in pay and above all a reduction in available food by coming to the mines. See IGBEA, Nachschlag Heinrich Wecke, I, 'Besprechungen mit den Arbeitervetretern der Zeche Julia und Recklinghausen am 21.1.1946', 21.1.1946.

by the German labour exchanges which as one of the very first elements of German administration had been revived soon after the British took control of the Zone.¹ A huge amount of the labour exchanges' time and energy was expended on the miners' programme - according to a reliable estimate at the beginning of 1946 up to 50 percent of the total activity of German labour exchanges was devoted to finding new miners.²

Given this concentration of effort, it was not surprising that a steady stream of men began to arrive at the mines. In the fourth quarter of 1945 new labour outnumbered returning ex-prisoners of war by almost three to one and by March 1946 99 percent of recruits were gained by directions to work.³ The unemployed who registered with labour exchanges were given a medical examination and, if fit, sent off to the mines; discharged prisoners of war were checked for suitability for mine work; German labour officials and British Military Police carried out spot checks on street and cinema queues to flush out likely labour and a series of labour supply directives established the overriding manpower priority of hard coal mining.⁴ By March 1946, the labour exchanges had directed 60,000 men to the pits.⁵

There was no doubt however that these results stood in no proportion to the amount of time and energy expended on producing them. Overall, the attempt

¹ OBADA I 1100/791/45, 307 P. Military Government Detachment to Dr. Rudolf Amelunxen, 6.7.1945; Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions', op.cit.

² 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau des Landesarbeitsamtes Nordrhein-Westfalen', (unpublished Ms. 1952), p.4. I would like to thank Herr Naßkrendt of the Landesarbeitsamt Nordrhein-Westfalen (LAA NRW) for the loan of the manuscript.

³ PRO FO 942, 183, (EIPS/97/146^B), ECOSC, 'Brief for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Part 1: Hard Coal Production in the British Occupied Zone of Germany', 8.4.1946; OBADA, I8010/723/47, OBAD, Lagebericht, February 1947, attached (DKBL) table; August Niehues, 'Ruhrbergbau und Arbeitsvermittlung', *Arbeitsblatt für die britische Zone*, 1947, 1, 3, pp.88-90.

⁴ PRO FO 1005, 1822, Manpower Division Technical Report for fortnight ending 29.12.1945; 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit., especially interview with Halbfell in minutes of meeting held on Tuesday August 6th. 1946; FO 1005, 1824, Labour Supply Directives No.'s 2,3,8,16,17,28 & 32.

⁵ 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit.

to conscript unskilled miners required, in the words of a German observer, 'schließlich einen Umfang an Verwaltungskräften, an Leerlauf, an Zeit und unproduktiver Arbeit, die in keinem Verhältnis zum Erfolg standen'.¹ An even bigger problem was making sure the directed labour stayed and worked in the mines. The British failed to achieve this, indeed failed so completely and disastrously as to put the whole coal recovery programme in jeopardy.

Table 1: Workforce and Production 1945 - 1946²

<u>Month</u>	<u>Workforce</u> <u>underground</u> <u>(at month's end)</u>	<u>as % of</u> <u>1938</u> ³	<u>Coal Produced (t)</u>	<u>as % of</u> <u>1938</u>
<u>1938</u> average ⁴	228813		10,607,000	
<u>1945</u>				
October	157,415	68.7	3,607,000	34.0
November	166,958	73.0	3,844,000	36.2
December	174,740	76.4	3,909,000	36.9
<u>1946</u>				
January	177,756	77.6	4,394,000	41.4
February	179,295	78.4	4,088,000	38.5
March	180,790	79.0	3,875,000	36.5
April	181,148	79.2	3,629,000	34.2
May	180,728	79.0	3,927,000	37.0
June	180,410	78.8	3,794,000	35.8
July	181,573	79.4	4,493,000	42.4
August	182,986	80.0	4,485,000	42.2
September	184,250	80.6	4,197,000	39.6
October	186,421	81.5	4,618,000	43.6

The directed labour did not stay in the mines, often fled in the first week of employment and frequently absconded with work clothing that was hard to replace. Of 60,000 workers sent to the mines by labour exchanges up to March 1946, only 18,000 were still there by the end of March.⁵ Between January and the end of September 1946 almost 50,000 men were dragged to the pits, yet over

¹ 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.3.

² *ZdKW*, 1, pp.3 & 20.

³ Workforce and production percentages are the author's calculation.

⁴ Production figure for 1938 is the average monthly figure.

⁵ 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit.

the same period the number of workers underground increased by less than 10,000 men.¹ This meant that at any given point in time, a large proportion of the newcomers in the mine had only just arrived - having been drafted in to replace those who had escaped the week before. The lack of skill of the newcomers coupled with their lack of motivation had a disastrous effect on productivity. In November 1945 the trend towards more normal coal production began to slow down and by the end of the year daily output per man/shift had fallen (from 2.76t for the week ending 26 November to 2.23t for the week ending 31 December).² Production ceased to climb in February, dropped sharply in March and regained its February level only in October 1946 (see table 1). It was not just that the newcomers themselves were under-producing. The continued influx of unmotivated men lowered also the level of general morale in the mines and in this way reduced the output of the experienced men as well.³ The low productivity figures meant that at the very same time as it was proving impossible to meet the NGCC's manpower targets, those targets had to be revised *upwards* to take account of the unexpectedly low productivity.

Against the backdrop of the urgent European demand for coal, these results were striking indeed. How can they be explained? At the best of times, conscription is a makeshift measure, not designed to enhance workforce productivity or morale. Yet, during the war production had held up well despite the growing proportion of conscript workers.⁴ Once a decision had been made to give them adequate food, Soviet prisoners of war and workers from Eastern Europe

¹ OBADA 18010/723/47, OBAD, Lagebericht, February 1947, attached (DKBL) table.

² PRO FO 942, 183, (EIPS/97/146^B), ECOSC, 'Brief for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Part 1: Hard Coal Production in the British Occupied Zone of Germany', 8.4.1946, esp. note 13. Figures are for faceworkers only.

³ It is, however, difficult from the available figures to make a clear distinction between the two groups. See chapter 3, p.122.

⁴ See chapter 1, pp.48-50.

attained between 60 and 80 percent of their German counterparts' productivity.¹

So why was the post-war experience so disastrous?

The mechanics of failure

In June 1946, the labour exchange in Arnsberg gave an account of a recent recruitment action. 68 men had been given a preliminary medical examination and issued with directions to work in the mines. Three directions were for one reason or another withdrawn, leaving 65 men to be given a more thorough medical examination. Before this could be carried out 31 of the draftees had disappeared. The remaining men were then duly examined and thirteen found to be unfit for mining work. The lorry to take those who passed the examination to the mines was supposed to arrive at 11 a.m. but in fact it did not turn up till 13.15 p.m. By then seven more of the 'recruits' had slipped away so that only 14 men were actually driven over to the Dortmund mines which were to be their destination.² A subsequent examination established that only eleven out of the fourteen men actually reported to the mine. By registration that evening the number had dropped to seven. On the following day, only two were still present.³ Later, some of those who left the mine made representations to the labour exchange in Arnsberg, complaining that the accommodation was infested.⁴ For its part the labour exchange complained to the regional labour office that ever since the men returned to the area, recruitment for mining had become even more difficult than before.⁵

¹ See Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter*, p.282 and Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, p.283.

² StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 47, AA Arnsberg to Präsident des LAA, Westfalen-Lippe, 28.6.1946.

³ StaM, Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 47, AA Dortmund to Präsident des LAA, Westfalen-Lippe, Bergbau Abteilung, 11.7.1946.

⁴ StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 47, AA Arnsberg to Präsident des LAA, Westfalen-Lippe, 28.6.1946 and enclosure: 'Niederschrift 26.6.1946, gez. Wenzel Plodek'.

⁵ Ibid.

A similar pattern emerges in a report drawn up a month or two earlier by the works' council of the Gneisenau pit. The report dealt with fifty conscripts sent by train from Holstein of whom 38 arrived at Dortmund station. On their arrival the conscripts complained of having been sent against their will and of being treated like slaves. The majority declared themselves unwilling to work ('eine Aufnahme der Arbeit (käme) überhaupt nicht in Frage'). The response of the works council, already aggrieved by newcomers absconding with good work clothing when the established workforce received nothing, was to suggest that if they were going to leave they should do it now before they were kitted out. By the following day there were only three of the conscripts left - and two of those departed shortly afterwards.¹

Every works council and labour exchange could tell a similar story. The value of these particular accounts is that they convey concisely many of the conditions which undermined the labour directions. First, they are not properly policed. There are no guards at the hostel, no police at the labour exchange. Men are drafted from Holstein against their will and yet no guards accompany them on the train. Secondly, the directions are not supported or accepted either by the draftees themselves or by those who should be enforcing them. Works council and management make no effort to restrain the newcomers. The works councillors actually invite the unwilling recruits to return home and no one lifts a finger to stop them. Even those who made the directions, the labour exchanges, seem to have given them so little support that the draftees are prepared to surface again at the labour exchange to make a complaint. The response of the labour exchange was not to send the men back to the mines but to pass on their criticisms to the regional labour exchange.

¹ Archive of the Zeche Gneisenau, Dortmund (AZG) File' I 126 Zuweisung von Arbeitskräften aus anderen Bezirken 1.11.45 - 31.10.56'. 'Declaration of miners' representatives at mine Gneisenau about the last transport of workmen', 3.5.1946.

Thirdly, the men have evidently very little anxiety about what will happen to them if they flee. They make no secret of their intention and do not go into hiding, simply return home.

The recruits' lack of anxiety revealed that the established system of tracing labour was remarkably ineffective. In theory, it should have been possible sooner or later to trace anyone who had disobeyed an order to work in the mines. Their names would be recorded in the labour exchanges' files. To obtain new employment they would have to re-register with a labour exchange and at that point the authorities ought to have been able to catch up with them. Yet this does not seem to have happened. The NGCC claimed that a large number of deserters from the Schleswig-Holstein action had been sent back to the Ruhr at their own expense but this did not tally with the mines' experience and was probably a bluff. The labour exchanges admitted in confidence that they were in no position to trace men who had absconded. In March, it is true, three men were sentenced to six months' imprisonment for refusing to go the mines and another two were given three month sentences for leaving the Ruhr without due cause. Yet, considering that in March alone, 5,000 miners left the pits¹ this was no great achievement.² Evidently by registering in a different district or other means it was easy to avoid detection.

Even when the newcomers stayed in the mines, it proved impossible to get much work out of them. In September 1946, the OBAD was investigating a complaint against a pit deputy who had refused to allow a young haulier to leave the mines. The deputy's defence provided an indication of the problems which the conscripts presented to mine managements. The haulier in question had been on the mine's books for about a month. Yet during that time, he had barely

¹ Excluding invalidity, death or movement from one mine to another.

² WWA F26, 380, Concordia to HQ 1. Ruhr Coal District, 7.2.1946 and HQ NGCC to RCD's, 26.2.1946.

worked a complete shift. Either he had been absent altogether, or had arrived late or wanted to leave early. "Wenn das Arbeitsamt glaubt, wir hätten hier eine Irrenanstalt, dann laß es auch die nötigen Wärter dazu stellen. Ich lehne jede Verantwortung für Z ab und bitte, ihn dem Arbeitsamt zur Verfügung zu stellen...Der Ton, den sich die im letzten Jahr eingestellten jungen Männer zum größten Teil angeeignet haben, geht entschieden zu weit. Sagen wir ihnen etwas, bekommen wir immer freche Antworten".¹ The Mines' Inspectorate noted frequent complaints that the newcomers were not only refusing to do their share but were also intimidating the established workforce and preventing it from working properly.² Although the NGCC repeatedly demanded tougher measures, management seemed unable to assert its authority on the workforce.

The unguarded prison

These failures revealed that the administrative system as a whole was simply not geared up to coerce labour on a large scale. During the war, directions had been carried out within the framework of a police state. A centralised, efficient and ruthless network of security forces had backed up the system of labour controls and had intimidated the labour force into compliance. By contrast, the authorities in the post-war period were from the start hampered by the lack of police. The British did not create a security administration to match the Nazis police apparatus. This was doubtless a good thing but it made it very difficult to enforce the directions or to trace those who fled the mines and it meant that new labour was not deterred from quitting the mines.

The classic example here was Operation Clobber. At the beginning of December

¹ OBADA I 3850/2263/46, 'Nicht Herauslassen des Schleppers Z vom Revier 25. Prosper I', Bericht des Fahrsteigers Göbbelsmann, 30.9.1946.

² OBADA I 8010/28/47, OBAD to HQ NGCC, 'Kurzbericht über die Lage im Ruhrkohlenbergbau für November 1946', 10.1.1947.

1945, the German Mines Supplies Organisation¹ (GMSO) informed the collieries that a large number of soldiers were to be released from Prisoner of War camps in the near future and that these would be scrutinised for potential recruits for the mines. 30,000 new miners were expected from the action and, in view of this, recruitment of civilians was to be discontinued. A Military Government manpower report at the end of December was forced to reduce this estimate. It appeared likely that only about 40 percent of the soldiers released registered with the labour exchanges. Civilian recruitment was therefore to be resumed. A further report on 12th January 1946 had to make the unhappy admission that of the 30,000 miners promised from the operation, 384 had been delivered.²

As well as making it more difficult to trace likely recruits or recalcitrants, the absence of an efficient and ruthless police force weakened the managers' ability to discipline the conscripts. During the war, the threat of bringing in the Gestapo, a step which managements had not hesitated to take even in minor disciplinary matters, had been a major element in sustaining the pressure to work.³

It could be argued that the British might still have posted troops to the mines, guarding the new recruits' barracks and so on. Indeed this is what the French, concerned at the failure of the Ruhr's export programme and themselves inclined to a tougher approach, continually demanded.⁴ Yet the British were loath to adopt a more obvious military presence. In part their unwillingness to do this stemmed from their recognition that, no matter how many troops they posted in the Ruhr, they would not be able to create a watertight system. The

¹ In German the organisation was known as the *Versorgungszentrale des deutschen Bergbaus*.

² WWA F35, 3495, GMSO Circular 161, 7.12.1945; PRO FO 1005, 1822, Manpower Division Fortnightly Technical Reports for fortnight ending 29.12.1945 and 12.1.1946.

³ Werner, *"Bleib übrig"*, p.26ff, p.77ff, p.171ff. and p.318ff.

⁴ 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit.; WWA S22 (OMGUS) AG 45-46/103/2, US Political Advisor to Clay, 26.4.1946.

labour might simply flee into other zones.¹ More significant was their fear of arousing the opposition of the established workforce and thus depressing rather than increasing production. The British had not forgotten the lesson of 1923 when the French occupation had resulted in a policy of passive resistance, the miners reporting for work and then idly sitting in the pits.² It was not that the established workforce was particularly ill-disposed to the British. Indeed, labour was the only group initially to have high expectations of the occupying powers. But they could not be expected to endorse a coercive policy which appeared to maintain the methods of the Nazis and was directed at their own countrymen. The unions continually protested against the directions³ and it was clear that the reaction of the workforce to a more military presence, to guards and barbed wire at the conscripts' barracks and so on would be very negative. Such a policy would not only offend against the loyalties of the miners, it might also seem to them the first step towards placing the whole workforce under coercion. So, the British ended up trying to conduct a coercive policy in a non-coercive manner, hoping that new labour would knuckle down to mining the coal and undertaking very little when it turned out that they would not do so.

The weaknesses of indirect rule

Even given the limitations to the security system and the understandable reluctance to create a police state, the ineffectiveness of the directions was striking. Many of the problems stemmed from the fact that most of the enforcement was actually being carried out by German officials. The British felt

¹ 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit.

² PRO FO 943, 185, 'Brief on special points arising from Coal Experts' report for use in Foreign Secretary's discussion with the French', October 1946; PRO FO 943, 186, 'Informal meeting with Mr. H.E.Collins...at Norfolk House', 6.5.1947.

³ 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit., in particular minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 6 August, 1946, remarks by August Schmidt.

constrained in the amount of pressure they could put on the German administration because they saw themselves as being dependent on its cooperation. Military Government apparatus was small. The size of Manpower Division, for example, and even more so of the North German Coal Control bore no relation to the tasks involved unless they were to delegate large areas of their responsibility to German officials.¹ The question as to why they were not larger goes beyond the limits of this study since it applied to all sections of Military Government. In part the British probably felt they had no choice, since money was short and a British administration would have been expensive. On the other hand at least some of the costs might have been borne by the Zone so that financial pressures can not be the sole explanation. The British seem to have believed that a system of indirect rule, in which German administrations carried out the bulk of the work, would be less likely to arouse resistance and so, ultimately, more efficient. There was much to support this view, but it meant that policies could be implemented only with the cooperation or at least on the sufferance of the German authorities. As a leading representative of the Manpower Division's Labour Supplies Branch put it, "I do not think it is merely a matter of checking a sample here and inspecting there because on many sides of the work we have not sufficient Allied officials to carry out the detailed checks required if the German officials we are checking are in the overwhelming majority in complete opposition to our policy". He went on, "...we have to consider facts, we have to see how far we can drive the human machine".²

Many German officials gave the directions only half-hearted support. This was true, for example, of the German labour administration. The then president of

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS) CO HIST BR 3/406-1/22, Undated notes by NGCC towards an official history of the NGCC, esp. Section 1. The notes record that in April 1947 there were only 44 officers in the Production Branch, responsible for controlling all mining in the British Zone!

² 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit.

the Westphalian regional labour exchange, August Halbfell, noted that both German and Military Government inspectors carried out controls in cinema and street queues but that only the Military Government's checks were effective.¹ It may well have been a problem of legitimacy - that in the crucial moment of encounter, a rueful smile or a pleading look could deflect the German official not quite certain of his cause from pursuing his control too forcefully. It is true that the labour administration engaged in little open opposition to British policy. Yet senior officials did protest against coercion and, in private, repeatedly spoke against compulsory placings.² The German authorities made such little attempt to place conscripts under guard or to prevent them from fleeing that it is evident they deliberately avoided enlisting the full panoply of coercion. Another piece of evidence for covert resistance to the directions was the low number of juvenile recruits to the mines which suggested that many careers advisers in the exchanges refused to obey the order to direct youngsters to the mines.³

Moreover, the negative or uncertain attitude of the labour exchange officials very probably transmitted itself to the recruits. Certainly, the willingness of the Arnsberg recruits to complain in person at the labour exchange suggests that they knew the officials to be of one mind with themselves.

That the labour officials were uncertain of their cause is not surprising. For a start, the German officials probably found it very uncomfortable to issue labour directions in the name of the former enemy. Secondly, it was well known that

¹ Ibid.

² OBADA 18000/1147/46, President of LAA Hannover to Military Government, Hannover, 22 February 1946; OBAD 16301/927/46, Memorandum by Dr. Herwegen, Referent für Berufsberatung beim LAA Westfalen-Lippe, Münster 25 April 1946: "Arbeiter können durch Zwangsmaßnahmen in die Gruben geschickt werden. Bergleute sind durch Zwang nicht zu gewinnen".

³ See the comments in Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions', op.cit., Appendix A, Section 'Provision of Training'.

most of the coal produced was going for export and at prices well below the market rate. (In fact, in order to avoid greater unrest, the British were covertly feeding more coal into the zonal consumption than their international commitments allowed them, but this was kept secret to avoid a diplomatic row.)¹ It was generally felt that the British had no overall commitment to reconstruction as a whole, except where it suited their interests to do so. Everyone knew of the Morgenthau plan and the level of coal exports seemed to prove that German recovery was a low priority. Thus few Germans could see the coal recruitment programme as a contribution to German recovery.

The half-hearted approach to enforcing the directions was even more marked amongst the colliery managers. For them, recognition that the production drive was not serving national recovery was joined by a second concern, namely, that it contributed little to the recovery of the industry either. The mines were running on a loss and subsidy basis which covered operational costs but not depreciation, let alone making a profit.² In any case, the devalued Reichsmarks were a poor reward for an industry that desperately needed supplies, equipment and new preparatory and development work. In effect, every ton of coal mined was using up the reserves of the industry without putting anything back. American observers believed that under existing price and subsidy policies the managers' logical policy was to keep 'production at the lowest possible level consistent with its members continuing in office'.³ Given this situation, the employers could not be expected to exert themselves in extracting production from unwilling recruits. In addition, the influx of unskilled labour of all ages, often in poor condition, would in the long term

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS) AG 45-46/103/2, Echols, AGWAR, to Clay, April 1946 (exact date illegible), ref: W-85224.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104 - 1/39, Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948.

³ *Ibid.*

intensify the industry's labour problems and costs.

Thus, the managers tended not to share the British sense of urgency. They gave longer-term interests a greater priority to the detriment of maximising coal production in the short term. Halbfell complained to the British that a number of employers were paying no attention to the realities of the labour market and were setting unreasonable standards for new recruits.¹ Large numbers of men were passed as fit by the labour exchanges, sent to the mines and then rejected by the doctors of the *Knappschaft*, the industry's health insurance body. Some of these rejections were understandable. The labour exchanges, mindful of the manpower quotas imposed by the British authorities, were remarkably unselective in the health standards they applied to possible adult recruits. Quite a number of the conscripts would have been 'useless in any industry'.² Nevertheless, there was clear evidence that the *Knappschaft* was more concerned about the possible future burden on its resources of large numbers of medically sub-standard recruits than about the urgency of the situation. It was therefore prepared to maintain a rigour in its standards which the British officials regarded as excessive.³ The Chief Medical Officer of the British Ministry for Fuel and Power estimated that at least 10 percent more candidates could be accepted than had been passed by the *Knappschaft*.⁴

Authority and power in the mining industry

An even more important factor restraining management from asserting its will on the workforce was not opposition to British goals but uncertainty about its

¹ 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit.

² PRO FO 1005, 1738, G.P.R.B., Intelligence Division, CCG(BE), Social Survey Report No.5: 'The life and working conditions of the mining trainee', 31.12.1946, p.8.

³ 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit., minutes of the 2nd meeting.

⁴ *Ibid.*

own position. A point often missed in historical accounts emphasising the swift return of German employers to power is that, in the early years, employers and managers in mining and in other industries were in a very peculiar, uncertain position. In some cases the top directors were in prison, in others the parent company was no longer able to control colliery policy. The chain of command had been broken and colliery managers often had to decide whose interests they should be serving.¹ They had to weigh up the possibility that the British would be in charge for years to come against the loyalty to their former bosses. Furthermore, at the end of 1945, the British expropriated the mine owners and it seemed as if the pits would be socialised or nationalised on the British model. The trade unions were in the ascendant and the managers had every reason to be cautious in their dealings with the men. Another, more direct and personal, threat to mine managers was that of denazification. At the end of 1945, Bergamt Dinslaken reported that discipline generally was very lax and an improvement could not be expected, 'bis die Aufsichtsbeamten 100%ig sicher sind, daß ihnen keine Unannehmlichkeiten durch Anschwärzereien und Anzeigen entstehen'.² Managers feared that the workforce would make accusations to a denazification panel about their behaviour in the Nazi era. Despite repeated efforts on the part of the NGCC, denazification continued into 1947.³

As a result of their insecurity vis à vis the workforce, the employers were unable to apply much pressure to the new recruits. Bergamt Krefeld complained in July 1946 that the instructions of the overmen were continually being disregarded, even violently opposed. If the overmen tried to punish the offenders, the works

¹ Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948, op.cit.

² OBADA I 8010/1415/45, Bergamt (BA) Dinslaken to OBAD, Lagebericht für November 1945, 2.12.1945.

³ Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948, op.cit.

council overturned the punishment.¹ The industry's medical staff who, during the war, had been extremely niggardly in allowing miners sick leave suddenly became extremely lenient since 'bei eingetretenen (gesundheitlichen, MR) Komplikationen wohl keine der Stellen, die darauf drängen, daß diese Leute möglichst weiterarbeiten sollen, den entscheidenden Arzt decken wird..', as the management of one colliery noted.² Absenteeism in general was treated with great laxity.³

Given the difficulties in enforcing discipline, it is not surprising that managers adopted a resigned and passive attitude to the conscripts.⁴ In place of forcing the recruits to work, managers favoured dismissing those who would not do so. Yet, dismissals were clearly a measure of desperation in a situation where the men wanted to leave the industry. Managers must have been aware that they were thereby encouraging other recruits to behave badly on the off chance of being sent home, thus undermining the whole coercive approach.⁵ Again and again, the Ruhr coal controllers had to warn the mines that they could not dismiss when they wanted to, which suggests that the warnings had little effect.⁶

The weakness and insecurity of the management and deputies contrasted sharply with the wartime situation, a fact which helps to explain why production stayed so high during the war despite the ever larger percentage of conscript labour in the workforce. During the war 'tätliche Übergriffe' had been

¹ OBADA I 8010/1824/46, BA Krefeld, Lagebericht für Juli 1946.

² OBADA I 3874/281/48, BA Lothringen, 'Gutachten über die Kranken- und Unfallzahlen', 31.5.1948.

³ PRO FO 942, 183, Brief for Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Part 1 Hard Coal Production British Occupied Zone of Germany, 8.4.1946.

⁴ See Paul Breder, *Geschichten vor Ort. Erinnerungen eines Bergmanns*, Essen 1979, chapter 'Neubergleute', *passim*.

⁵ There was clear evidence that new miners were committing offences in the hope of being dismissed. OBADA I 5207/1275/46, BA Dinslaken to OBAD, 7.6.1946.

⁶ WWA F26, 379, 1.RCD to Concordia, 17.1.1946; F26, 380, 1.RCD to Betriebsdirektor, Concordia, 5.6.1946; F26, 782, 1.RCD to Generaldirektoren, 5.9.1946 and 1.RCD to Generaldirektoren, 9.9.1946; F26, 783, 1.RCD to all mining companies, 26.8.1947.

'an der Tagesordnung', as miners subsequently recalled.¹ For example, a foreman entrusted with the job of supervising Ukrainian forced labourers is recorded as having advised German miners working alongside them that the only way to get a Ukrainian to work was to beat him.² So bad was the treatment meted out by the mines (and sometimes by the miners) that the Wehrmacht sections responsible for Soviet POW's felt obliged to warn the industry that the conscripts were being treated too badly.³

If management insecurity was a key problem in the post-war period, the question then arises why the British were undermining the authority of the very officials on whom their production drive depended. There were two points here. The first was that different goals were in conflict. The moral and political imperative of denazification was at odds with the drive for economic recovery. Though the NGCC itself was hostile to denazification and its officers frequently assured German managers that they looked at mining 'nicht aus politischen sondern aus technischen Gesichtspunkten',⁴ pressure came from higher up to continue.⁵ Here in miniature was a problem that was to confront Military Government on a large scale in the following years.

Secondly, the British were playing an uneasy balancing act between capital and labour. They needed management's help but were unwilling to antagonise labour. Military Government's nervousness was exacerbated by the fact that they felt unable to offer the miners any special material gratification for their work. There was therefore a readiness to make other concessions. The expropriation of the mines, for instance, was, as is now clear, a sop to labour

¹ Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter*, pp.225-6.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ WWA F26, 381, Minutes of a discussion with RCD1 on 21.11.1946, 21.11.1946.

⁵ See also chapter 3, p.135.

demands, rather than the first step in a seriously meant programme of socialisation.¹ Even the decision to continue denazification in the mining industry was in part a concession to labour. In Spring 1946, the NGCC had successfully requested that all denazification be brought to an end because of its impact on production. In July, however, union representations led to the establishment of a new denazification committee.² On a much smaller scale, a telling example of Military Government's unwillingness to back management too strongly came in an exchange between an NGCC district officer and the mining directors in his area. The NGCC representative, colonel Ritchie, requested the directors to stop works councillors from coming to his office to discuss matters which should be settled within the colliery. The directors responded that they gave works councillors plenty of opportunity to air their grievances and suggested that Ritchie might like to inform them himself. This Ritchie was not prepared to do. He could hardly throw them out, he said, and hoped that management's influence would be sufficient to solve the problem. No one wanted to be seen wielding the big stick.³

Apart from opposition to British policy or insecurity, one thing that applied to all German participants was that early failures undermined the conscription programme's credibility and started a vicious circle in which lack of commitment and failure only served to strengthened each other. What so inflamed the works councillors of Gneisenau, in the example given earlier, was not the notion of conscripting labour itself but the inefficiency of an operation in which the newcomers were given the only supplies of work clothing and then allowed to disappear. Thus disposed against an inefficient system, the works

¹ Milert, 'Die verschenkte Kontrolle', p.110.

² Henry Collins, *Mining memories and musings. Autobiography of a mining engineer*, London 1985, p.42ff.; PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD/P(46)12, 'Denazification of the Coal Industry', 5.10.1946.

³ WWA F26, 381, Memo concerning directors' conference on 2.7.1947, 2.7.1947.

councillors ensured that it failed to work.

The costs of the failure to control: training

The costs of British policy were felt not just in terms of coal production but also in human terms, particularly in the mines' appalling safety record in 1945 and 1946. The approach to training revealed that, despite initial good intentions, a coherent and safety-conscious approach to inducting the newcomers was impossible within a programme of unenforced directions.

It was, of course, to be expected that the urgency of increasing production would lead to a fairly short training programme. It was also true that it was not easy to decide how comprehensive any training should be. The nature of the skills involved was hard to specify. At the face - where most of the new miners were needed - the demands on the worker were great but there were few formal or easily definable skills. Many of the individual jobs involved little specialist knowledge and could be imparted relatively swiftly. On the other hand experience and knowledge could make an enormous difference whenever, as frequently happened, some difficulty was reached, conditions became unfavourable and so on. In addition conditions between faces varied enormously. A newcomer could be prepared for one type of work in one set of conditions fairly swiftly, but the smooth running of the mine often depended on the colliery being able to direct men to different work or to different faces with different conditions. And of course, apart from production considerations, the danger to the new miner and to the men around him from lack of adequate preparation was greater than in almost any other profession. In other words, green labour could be sent with minimal training into the mine and be expected to make a contribution to production, but the potential costs of such a strategy in terms of productivity, health and safety were great.

Nevertheless, despite the undoubted pressures and the difficulty of defining the

appropriate training period, there were a number of signs that training would be taken fairly seriously. The British authorities themselves called for an improvement in general safety standards. One of the first acts of British officers in the Ruhr was to stress the need to restore the authority of the Mines' Inspectorate. The Oberbergamt Dortmund felt empowered to inform the local *Bergämter* that the relaxation of the Inspectorate's safety regulations during war-time now no longer applied.¹ The OBAD itself seemed determined to set new training standards. In November it sent out a directive which began with the demand for the resumption of proper training methods and implicitly distanced itself from wartime practice: 'Der von uns aus grubensicherheitlichen Gründen immer wieder erhobenen Forderung, niemand im Bergbau zu beschäftigen, der nicht planmäßig ausgebildet worden ist, muß auf allen Zechen wieder die erforderliche Beachtung geschenkt werden'.² Particularly important at the present time, the directive continued, was the training of adult trainees (i.e., as distinct from juvenile recruits) who should be trained 'nach einem festen Plan zu wirtschaftlicher und unfallsicherer Arbeit'.³

Another organisation interested in a humane and productive training and induction programme was the regional labour administration. The Westphalian Landesarbeitsamt (LAA)'s ruling on the payment procedure for new miners contained many clauses designed to protect the new miners from being thrown unprepared into production.⁴ For the first three to four weeks the newcomers were not to be employed on a contract (ie. piece-work) wage. This had a number of advantages. Above all, the newcomers would not feel under

¹ OBADA I 2004/657/47, Meeting between OBAD and representatives of the British Mines' Inspection Control, 3.July 1945; OBADA I 3603/649/45, OBAD to all *Bergämter*, 31.7.1945.

² OBADA I 6300/1080/45, OBAD to all *Bergämter*, 17.11.1945.

³ Ibid.

⁴ WWA F35, 492, GMSO, Circular No. 140 to all mining companies and mines, 22.11.1945.

pressure either from their own pocket or (where a group contract wage¹ was in operation) from their experienced colleagues to produce more than they were really able to in order to raise their personal or group earnings. After an initial period, the new miners could be employed on contract wages but were not to be assessed as full miners. Thus in the first month of contract wage work, for instance, average performance was defined as 60 percent of the performance of a fully skilled worker. There would thus be no group pressure on them to produce as much as experienced labour, while a training supplement of RM 2.50 a shift meant that their lower output would not put them out of pocket either.²

It is true that the regulations were often very vague. The Mines Inspectorate, for example, long conscious of its limited powers and its duty not to interfere with coal production, was well versed in the art of designing general directives which created the appearance of systematic and safety-conscious controls but in reality involved little constraint on managerial practice. The November directive itself was a typical example of this.³ Most of the more detailed guidelines which followed the general demands at the beginning were concerned not with green labour at all but with the training of young apprentices, a group which in 1945 comprised but a tiny fraction of new labour in the mines. The page and a half devoted to adult trainees was vague in many respects and, where it did lay down standards, they tended to be fairly minimal ones. Special training groups ('Anlerngruppen') should be created (ie corresponding to wartime practice) in which the newcomers would learn all the skills pertaining to that

¹ *Kameradschaftsgedinge* or *Gruppengedinge*, then the most common forms of payment. In 1949, just over 2/3 of face workers were covered by group contract wages. See Hans Walther, 'Die Entwicklung der Gedinge im Jahre 1954 im Vergleich zu den Jahren 1949 - 1950 im westdeutschen Steinkohlenbergbau', *Glückauf*, 1955, 91, 9/10, pp.217-226, here p.221, table 10.

² WWA F35, 492, GMSO. Circular No. 140 to all mining companies and mines. 22.11.1945.

³ For this and following remarks, see OBADA I 6300/1080/45, OBAD to all *Bergämter*, 17.11.1945.

group. Yet what those skills were or whether the training was to take place at a productive face or a special training face the directive did not say. The length of training was also not specified, save that it be determined by the prevailing needs of production. The only thing about the groups which the guide-lines did specify was that they should not 'normally' contain more than 8 men. In addition, the new miners should receive at least 16 hours theoretical instruction alongside the practical work.¹

This vagueness would not have mattered if the mines had voluntarily acted in accordance with the spirit of the regulations, but in fact there is ample evidence that they did not even comply with the letter. For instance, a number of mines put trainees into contract wage without making allowance for their inexperience and without the trainee supplement. The new miners were thus from the beginning under pressure to produce as much as their more experienced colleagues.² Even when the letter of the law was upheld there was nothing in either the OBAD or the LAA rulings to prevent the mines from putting great pressure on the newcomers to produce more coal. In particular, the OBAD directive had not specified that the training ('Anlernung') should take place away from productive faces. What seems to have happened in many cases is that after an introductory period of one week, the trainees were put into productive faces where training considerations came a very poor second to the short-term dictates of production.³ Clear evidence that neither the letter nor the spirit of the OBAD ruling was being upheld is given by the fact that OBAD itself grew increasingly restive and in September 1946 wrote to the GMSO expressing grave

¹ Ibid.

² WWA F35, 493, GMSO, Circular No. 41 to mining companies and mines, 4.2.1947 and attached memo.

³ BBA 30, 31, Jahresbericht des Steinkohlenbergbaues der Gutehoffnungshütte 1945/1946, section 'Ausbildungswesen'; BBA 30,245, GHH to BA Dinslaken-Oberhausen, 17.6.1947; OBADA I 6307/1076/45, BA Dortmund 1 to OBAD, 8.10.1945; OBADA I 6300/27/47, 'Sammelberichte zu I 6300/2607/46', no date.

concern at the lack of systematic training and the high accident rate.¹

Why was this? One of the problems was that, because of the difficulties of co-ordinating transports, the mines often received large numbers of men at one go, which precluded their measured introduction into production.² Another point was that wartime practice continued to influence the colliery managers, try as the Inspectorate might to engender a new spirit in peacetime. Though not all wartime experience was negative³ and the approach to labour induction evidently varied considerably, there is little indication that wartime 'training' usually meant anything more than that the newcomers were flung into the production process and given the minimum information necessary to carry out the allotted tasks.⁴ Many managers continued to approach induction in this manner in the post-war period. The new miners were commonly regarded as work-shy and it was widely believed that the primary task was to 'educate' them to a more productive attitude by putting on as much economic, managerial and collegial pressure as possible.⁵

Even this approach, inhumane and narrow-minded as it was, might not have been so disastrous had it not been for the fact that the conscripts were both unwilling to work and not susceptible to blandishments or management pressure. It was the combination of coercion and lack of authority that made

¹ OBADA I 6307/1993/46, OBAD to GMSO, 10.9.1946; OBADA I 6300/2607/46, OBAD to all Bergämter, 2.12.1946.

² BBA 10, 88, Minutes of Meeting of Company Managers on 20.11.1945, 20.11.1945; see also WWA F26, 375, Internal Concordia memorandum of 30.11.1945 concerning 'Arbeitsbedingungen bergfremder Arbeiter'.

³ The officially recommended strategy from 1942 onwards was to train groups of conscripts for one specific task, such as coal-getting, packing or shifting the conveyor and this, if implemented conscientiously, was a reasonable approach. The OBAD itself drew on the method both in the 1945 code and even more explicitly in its revised training regulations of 1947. See Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter*, p.282; OBADA I6307/1993/46, OBAD, 'Bestimmungen über den Einsatz bergfremder Personen', 5.2.1947.

⁴ Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter*, p.283f.

⁵ A succinct statement of this attitude can be found in a confidential paper prepared by the management of the Concordia mine in WWA F26, 375, 'Entlohnung bergfremder Umschüler', 7.12.1945.

the post-war situation so dangerous. In the first place, the failure to hold on to recruits meant that the NGCC was under ever greater pressure to achieve results, and consequently to sacrifice even the minimum training programme envisaged by the collieries. Again and again the mines were ordered to get all possible men to the face.¹ But even more decisive was that the trainees' own attitude meant in most cases that a measured training scheme was useless. For many conscripts, the main priority was to get out of the mines as soon as possible. Even if they were nervous of fleeing the mines without permission, they wanted to avoid becoming qualified, fearing that this might make it harder to leave in the future.² Their reluctance was manifest in the strikingly low attendance figures at training classes (particularly, though not only, when the instruction was held outside working hours). At Mont Cenis mine, for example, of 114 new miners called to attend classes after work in April 1946, only one appeared and he, as it transpired, was actually a student at a mining academy gaining some practical experience.³ It was a self-perpetuating cycle, in which the unwillingness of recruits convinced management that only toughness and material pressure would get them to work, while management's hostile attitude confirmed the unhappy conscripts' view that they had landed in a nightmare situation from which they sought to escape.

The result was a catastrophic rise in accidents. During the war, the worst accident figure had come in 1943, with 65 reported accidents per 100,000 shifts. For 1945 as a whole the figure lay slightly higher at 69. In the first quarter of 1946 the figure reached 116 (excluding the disastrous accident at Grimberg 3/4) and rose further in the second quarter to 138 per 100,000 shifts, or over double

¹ Eg. BBA 8, 401, Note from the directors, ref.: D/DI 1. to sections B11/B21, 'Betr.: Einsatz Umschüler', 25.7.1947.

² OBADA I 6300/348/46, BA Recklinghausen to OBAD, 11.2.1946; OBADA I 6305/609/46, 'Sammelberichte': report of BA Lünen, no date.

³ OBADA I 6305/609/46, 'Sammelberichte', report of BA Castrop-Rauxel, no date.

the war-time record.¹

The costs of conscription: prestige

On top of the economic and social costs, the mining programme also lost the British a lot of their prestige, not only because it was contradictory and ineffectual but also because it was so blatantly undemocratic. It appeared that the British regarded the new miners purely as a factor of production, as inert as capital equipment, without needs or inclinations. Men were coerced to the mines in Nazi fashion and the goal of democratisation seemed to have gone out of the window. Even those Germans reasonably well disposed to the British will have echoed Konrad Adenauer's sentiments when he said that Britain, with its democratic traditions, could afford to introduce the Bevan boys, but Germany needed a taste of freedom.²

The logic of coercion

Why had the British opted for coercion? To a certain extent the decision does seem to have reflected a rather utilitarian approach to German labour on the part of the Military Government. A Manpower Division report from September 1945, for example, concluded on the question of compulsory directions for the mines that 'management interviewed were reasonable confident of success in the light of their war experience and in spite of the reluctant attitude of the recruits'.³ It comes as something of a surprise to see how readily this and other reports speak of reintroducing the German 'machinery', ie the Nazi apparatus for

¹ OBADA I 3050/1499/46, OBAD to the Oberpräsident of Westphalia, 27.8.1946. This is not to suggest that the increase in accident *reporting* was due solely to an increase in the actual number of accidents, nor to attribute the increase exclusively to new labour. See OBADA I 2107/630/46, 'Bericht über die Besprechung mit den Leitern der Bergämter Werden, Essen I', 15.3.1946.

² PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD paper P(46)18, 'Report on conversation with Dr. Adenauer by the Assistant Director ISC Branch', 5.12.1946.

³ Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions', op.cit.

controlling labour, of compelling youngsters to work in the mines against their will and of benefiting from the proven ability of German mine managements to squeeze production out of under-nourished and poorly housed modern slave-labour. Hostility towards the Germans, on the one hand, and long immersion in the climate of total war, on the other, had no doubt prepared the ground for these measures.

But it has already become clear that the attempt to rebuild the labour force by compulsion was more the result of constraint than conviction. In a moment of wry humour, the Oberpräsident of the North Rhine Province, Robert Lehr, caught perfectly the dilemma of the British. Lehr had just advocated a sort of National Service in the mines for all young Germans as a means of solving the labour problem (see below) and was now defending himself against criticism from some German colleagues that such a policy was undemocratic. Dr Lehr, as the minutes record, 'betont die Pflicht als Regierungschef, die Jugend zur Demokratie zu erziehen und erklärt aber, daß er abends nach Beendigung seiner Dienstgeschäfte nicht ganz den Eindruck habe, daß er tagsüber ein guter Demokrat gewesen sei, aber er glaubt auf der anderen Seite, daß die Militärregierung ebenso wenig gute Demokraten gewesen sind.' 'Dieses Bon-Mot', note the minutes, 'wurde von englischer Seite sehr gut und humorvoll aufgenommen'.¹

The British authorities' lack of conviction was manifest in the fact that they were neither able nor willing to introduce the measures necessary to make the directions work. On the positive side Military Government was neither ruthless nor immoral enough to wish to recreate the Nazi state. Its goals of democratisation and denazification undermined attempts to mount a coercive

¹ HSTAD NW53, 272. 'Notizen von der Konferenz im britischen HQ in Lübbecke am 9.5.1946', 13.5.1946.

labour policy. On the negative side, it did not have the legitimacy, the resources or the nerve to be able to enforce its decisions. Military Government's hold was doubly tentative: not only was its authority insecurely anchored in the general population, but its control over the German administration was equally tenuous. The result was not only a failure to produce coal but also a dangerous and scrappy approach to new labour's integration.

So why did the British persist with directions? The alternative would have been to offer the sort of incentive which would have ensured a steady supply of voluntary and motivated workers. Given that mining enjoyed such a clear priority, one would not have thought this an insuperable task. Once achieved, it would make the conscriptions work without too much pressure or perhaps even enable the British to dispense with the whole sorry apparatus of coercion. Yet it is clear that this did not happen. The question is why.

2: The failure to provide incentives

Living conditions and remuneration

Conditions, even when measured against the low standards of post-war Germany, were generally unattractive in the Ruhr and indeed growing worse. In March 1946 miners' rations were cut from 3,400 calories per day to 2,864.¹ According to British nutritional calculations, miners were receiving little more than half the calories necessary to do very heavy work.² Some workers actually found themselves taking a wage-cut by going into the mines.³ Small wonder that few recruits felt inclined to stay.

¹ PRO FO 943, 186, (EIPS 147A), Memo, 'The Coal Industry in the British Zone', (April 1947).

² Ibid.

³ IGBEA Nachlaß Heinrich Weeke I, 'Besprechungen mit den Arbeitervertretern der Zeche Julia und Recklinghausen am 21.1.1946', 21.1.1946.

Housing conditions were very miserable. Most of those new miners who came from outside the Ruhr were housed in barracks, much of it originally constructed for the forced labour during the war. Many of the barracks were little more than wooden huts, in some cases barbed wire was still around them when the first new miners arrived.¹ Facilities were extremely limited. A British survey reported of such barracks that 'the buildings and surroundings are squalid. They bear the stigma of their former use and the atmosphere of the prison still remains'.² In many cases there were no partitions between rooms, just rows and rows of double or treble bunks. Some of the barracks were infested with lice.³ Another British survey of six mines, carried out in the autumn of 1946, gave a graphic description of conditions in one of the worst hostels. It was an inn, half of which was occupied by 34 miners. Light and ventilation were poor and a small stove was all that was available for heating, cooking and drying clothes. The furniture consisted of beds, lockers, two tables and some benches. 'There was no other furniture and the whole place was sordid in the extreme....The beds had straw filled palliasses made of sacking. One or two beds had a single dirty sheet and all had either one or two ragged blankets, some of them torn into ribbons and crudely pieced together again with thread'. In common with many hostels there were practically no cooking utensils or crockery and any equipment was apt to be stolen immediately by those who absconded. Yet for lack of clothes, energy and money, the miners spent practically all their time in the room.⁴

Poor conditions were not restricted to the new miners, of course, and the lack of

¹ Social Survey Report No.5, op.cit.

² Ibid., p.4.

³ OBADA I 3850/1805/46, Sammelberichte der Bergämter, September 1946; StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 47, AA Arnsberg to Präsident, LAA Westfalen-Lippe, 28.6.1946.

⁴ PRO FO 1005, 1738, PRO FO 1005, 1738, Intelligence Division CCG(BE), GPRB, Social Survey No.4: The Coal-miner and his family - a study in incentives, December 1946.

incentives was also progressively sapping the established workforce's willingness to produce. It is true that other aspects of British policy were also responsible for alienating the miners - the slow pace at which the British allowed unions to develop, for instance, and their apparent unwillingness to democratise control over the mining industry.¹ Another irritant was the high level of coal exports at below-market prices; resentment at what were seen as covert reparations was to prove a continuing hurdle to getting the miners to commit themselves to greater production.² But by far the most important factor was the deterioration in the miners' standard of living, particularly the cut in miners' rations in March.³ The cuts undoubtedly had a physical impact on the miners, particularly so on married men, since they did not consume their full ration anyway: miners' families received only the meagre civilian rations (as little as 900 calories a day in some cases) so that the men often shared their food with them.⁴ Clear evidence of the physical costs of lower rations was provided by a progressive decline in miners' weight.⁵ The British had, in effect, not only not regenerated the workforce but actually reduced its productive capacity. However the biggest impact of the ration cuts was probably psychological. Productivity dropped sharply *before* the cuts had even been introduced but *after* they had been announced.⁶ Periodical pronouncements about miners' weight loss hit morale harder than the loss of weight itself. To the miners, the food cuts symbolised the unwillingness of the British to put

¹ Milert, 'Die verschenkte Kontrolle', *passim*.

² Ulrich Borsdorf, 'Speck oder Sozialisierung. Produktionssteigerungskampagnen im Ruhrbergbau 1945 - 1947', in Hans Mommsen, Ulrich Borsdorf (ed.), *Glück auf Kamaraden! Die Bergarbeiter und ihre Organisationen in Deutschland*, Cologne 1979, p.345 - 366, esp. pp.354ff.

³ See, eg. OBADA I6305/609/46, Sammelberichte. Report from BA Gelsenkirchen, April 1946.

⁴ ZAA, 'Das Arbeitspotential in der britischen Zone', *op.cit.*; OBADA I 3874/281/48, Bergbau AG Lothringen, 'Gutachten über die Kranken- und Unfallziffern', 31.5.1948.

⁵ 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', *op.cit.*

⁶ Collins, *Mining Memories*, p.34.

something into the industry in return for what they were demanding from it.

Delayed response

Initially, Military Government was slow to recognise the need for a concentration of resources on the Ruhr. One of the problems was that, though the men on the ground might already be thinking in terms of the long-term reconstruction of the industry, at higher levels there was no long-term commitment to the regeneration of the mining industry. It was characteristic of British economic policy towards Germany at the end of the war that the negative goals, the dismantling of munitions and weapons production, strict production limits on other industries and so forth, were well defined, but the positive sides of policy such as establishing which branches were to be encouraged and how quickly they should recover remained vague.¹ Attempts before the Occupation to develop a more constructive policy were hampered by British fears of future competition from Germany and this was particularly true of the coal industry. A major policy document of the time concluded that, '...it is unthinkable that the circumstances which may preserve the German coal industry intact to meet a vital short-term European coal deficiency should be allowed to give that industry any undue initial advantage when normal supply conditions again prevail.'² It was not then clear how long that deficiency would last and consequently there was no initial willingness to spend money on the miners.³

In addition, despite the acknowledged importance of coal, planning for even the short-term requirements of increasing production was strikingly inadequate.

¹ Pingel, 'Der aufhaltsame Aufschwung', *passim*.

² PRO FO 942, 178, EIPS: 'The German Coal Industry. Report of the Working Party', (September 1944).

³ *Ibid.*

One indication of this is that the man who was to become head of the NGCC, Henry Collins, was first approached only in May 1945. At that point he refused to take on the job, and was not approached again until July, just a couple of weeks before the British were due to take over control of the Ruhr mines. Once acceptance had been secured, there was very little briefing and the first visit to the Ministry of Fuel and Power came two days before he left for the Ruhr. Collins was able to gain an accurate picture of Ruhr conditions in advance only because of the coincidence that a number of former students were stationed in the Ruhr and while on leave in England described the situation there.¹ Throughout 1945 and 1946, it was to be the experience of the authorities on the ground that there was little understanding in London of the problems in the Ruhr.²

One other understandable, though certainly not helpful, factor which initially hindered true appreciation of the Ruhr's needs was hostility towards the Germans. It was true that British occupation policy was characterised by the view that harsh coercive policies were not enforceable and jeopardised that minimum of consensus necessary between rulers and subjects, but it was also true that British policy in Germany was imbued with hostility to the German people. It was a major contradiction in British occupation policy that the victors went to Germany with democracy on their lips and anger and bitterness in their hearts. This hostility fomented coercive solutions to the labour problem and made it initially unthinkable that German workers should be allowed to call the tune and determine the conditions that were to be offered to them. Ernest Bevin himself opposed making extra rations available with the

¹ Interview with Henry Collins, 29.6.1984. Collins was actually Deputy Controller General of the NGCC but to all intents and purposes it was he who ran the organisation. The Controller General, Brigadier Marley, was rather the link between the NGCC and the Fuel and Power Division, CCG(BE).

² Ibid.

argument that German miners should not be better fed than Welsh miners. This was the voice of anger not of reason since, as American experts pointed out, there was at that time neither bread nor potato rationing in the United Kingdom and thus no limit on the calory intake of the miner.¹

Lower down the British administration too there was an initial unwillingness to take miners' welfare very seriously. There was the feeling that the Germans could jolly well take what they had been dishing out and that they should put their shoulders to the wheel and help rebuild Europe without worrying over much about their own comfort.² Even in 1947, when attitudes had changed a great deal, the GMSO claimed that British authorities had forbidden it from ordering sheets for the hostels with the argument that English soldiers did not receive any sheets either.³

When German organisations, particularly the unions and the labour exchanges, called for an improvement, the British accused them of having a double standard. What had been tolerable for forced labour during the war was now apparently intolerable for German workers. There was certainly some justification for this criticism. It was true that far worse conditions had been tolerated in war-time. And it was also true that racist thinking sometimes lay behind the differential standards. For example, a fact-sheet produced for labour exchanges and potential recruits contained, after an acknowledgement that most of the accommodation for outsiders was in barrack-style building, the undertaking that, 'Von Seiten der Zechen.. (alles) geschieht, um die Gemeinschaftsunterkünfte in einen zumutbaren und angemessenen Zustand für

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2, J.K.Galbraith & WW.Rostow to General Clay, 31.5.1946.

² A common attitude was, as Henry Collins observed, that 'the Germans have made their bed, now they must bloody well sleep in it.', interview with Henry Collins, 29.6.1984.

³ HStad NW9, 55, Minutes of meeting on 22.2.1947 in the Mannesmannhaus, 22.2.1947

deutsche Arbeitskräfte zu versetzen'.¹ Clearly, the sheet was trying to allay anxieties that the accommodation for new miners resembled war-time conditions, and it was perfectly understandable that it should do so, but the language used revealed that the employers were operating with a mental distinction not as between peace and war time but between conditions appropriate for foreign and those for German workers. British, indeed Allied, impatience with this attitude was expressed forcibly in the bitter exchanges between British and French manpower experts visiting the Ruhr in summer 1946 and German labour and housing officials. Allied officials wanted to know why accommodation was not available for recruits given that many men had been housed in the Ruhr during the war; by dint of angry and repeated questioning they forced the German representative, Dr. Rappaport, to admit that the Camps used during the war had, in many cases, by normal standards never been fit to live in.²

Given this climate of opinion it is not surprising that initially the British made no extra provision for the Ruhr miners. A major report by Manpower Division in September 1945, which dwelt at length on the manpower requirements of the Ruhr and on the need to direct labour to the mines, contained no discussion of incentives, which suggests that they were simply not on the agenda at that time.³

However, it was not long before the Division and the NGCC realised that a different approach was needed. For, as well as being more aware of the reality on the ground, they tended to take a longer term view of their reconstruction task. It is, for example, noteworthy that both organisations tried from the start

¹ AZG File '1 126 Zuweisung von Arbeitskräften aus anderen Bezirken 1.11.45 - 31.10.56', GMSO, 'Merkblatt für die Anwerbungsaktion in Holstein', no date.

² 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit., esp. minutes of Working Party on Manpower, Housing and Related Subjects, 7.8.1946.

³ Manpower Division, CCG(BE), 'Report on Labour, Housing and Working Conditions', op.cit.

to recruit apprentices to the industry, a move clearly not orientated to purely short-term production requirements.¹ The NGCC in particular could not fail to recognise that the regeneration and above all the rejuvenation of the mining workforce required major and long-term improvements in the status and relative and absolute material position of coal miners. As early as autumn 1945, the NGCC was arguing for special incentives for miners.² At a meeting with French representatives in spring 1946, the NGCC concurred wholeheartedly with the French opinion that more food should be available for the miners but regretted that this did not lie within the competence of the coal authorities.³ When the Deputy Controller General was asked in February 1946 what effect a small ration drop would have on the miners he predicted accurately the disastrous consequences which then ensued. Yet his words were not heeded and the ration cuts were implemented.⁴

Priming the pump of German recovery

Why, in view of the priority accorded to coal production, were the British unable to improve, indeed even maintain the miners' living and working conditions? There were, understandably enough, limits to what the British could be expected to offer from their own resources. The British budget was overburdened and the British population was in any case making increasing sacrifices to sustain occupied Germany.⁵

¹ OBADA 16301/1339/45, Circular from LAA Westfalen-Lippe to Labour Exchanges, 28.10.1945.

² NGCC, 'Interim Report on the General and Financial Situation of the Ruhr mining industry', in Astrid Föllmer Edling, 'Die Politik des Industrieverbands Bergbau im Ruhrgebiet 1945 - 1948. (Die Anstrengung um die Erhöhung der Kohlenförderung im Ruhrbergbau)', (Staatsexamensarbeit, BochumUniversity, 1977), pp.6-7.

³ PRO FO 943, 183, 'Conversations with M.Parisot, Directeur des Mines, 13-15 May 1946', May 1946.

⁴ Collins, *Mining memories*, p.34.

⁵ John E.Farquharson, *The Western Allies and the politics of food. Agrarian management in postwar Germany*, Leamington Spa 1985, p.93ff.

Yet if the British were not prepared to invest their own resources in Ruhr mining, they still had the option of using those of the Germans. To a certain extent this *was* done: the mining industry received sizeable subsidies from the British Zonal budget to cover operating losses.¹ However, taking German marks of little value from the Zonal budget was comparatively easy. To obtain the resources that really mattered more serious steps were required.

Before looking in more detail at the options open to the British, it should be borne in mind that foodstuffs, consumer goods, building materials and so on were extremely thin on the ground throughout the British Zone. Above all, food was becoming desperately short. Even *before* the influx of several million refugees, the area encompassed by the Zone had not been self-sufficient in terms of food production and well before the cessation of hostilities it had already been clear that the future British Zone would be dependent on outside sources of food.² Apart from the objective limits to agricultural production within the area, shortages of fertiliser and equipment had reduced agricultural yields. Furthermore, the controlled prices of the wartime and post-war economies gave farmers little incentive to sell their goods, so that a substantial proportion of agricultural produce never found its way into official distribution channels.³ Shortages of manufactured goods were no less acute than the shortfall in food. The closing stages of the war had brought production in most sectors to a virtual halt and coal and food shortages had prevented all but the most essential industries from making much of a recovery.

One of the Zone's biggest problems was that a very considerable proportion of its coal was being exported. Indeed, by the end of 1947 the three western Zones had

¹ See Theo Horstmann, 'Die Angst vor dem finanziellen Kollaps. Banken und Kreditpolitik in der britischen Zone zwischen 1945 und 1948', in Petzina and Euchner (eds.), *Wirtschaftspolitik*, pp.215-234.

² Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.28.

³ *Ibid.*, p.61ff.

exported 25 million tons of coal, primarily to France, the Low Countries and Scandinavia.¹ As a proportion of overall production this was not dramatically above pre-war peacetime levels, but in the context of post-war conditions it represented a very serious drain on German resources.²

Coal exports would not have had such a negative impact if the Zone had been properly recompensed for them. The Germans made much play of the fact that coal was being exported at \$10.50 a ton while the market price lay between \$25-30. Had Germany actually received the full price, it was argued, there would have been no difficulty in boosting calories and hence the level of coal production.³ This was an oversimplification which did not take into account the European countries' capacity to pay. They were extremely short of US dollars (indeed, that was one reason for the attractiveness of Ruhr as against US coal) and it was dollars that Germany would have to earn if it was to buy up grain on the world market.⁴ However there was no doubt that the low price paid made the coal exports an almost intolerable burden for the British Zone's war-torn economy.

A reduction in coal exports would therefore have had an enormously beneficial impact on the economy as a whole and on Ruhr coal production in particular. The extra coal available for internal consumption could have been channelled back to the miners via the production of consumer goods, for instance, or of mining supplies. Even more productive would have been to use the coal to produce fertiliser. This would rapidly have led to better food supplies for the Ruhr.⁵ Another option would have been to produce finished goods for export.

¹ Abelshausen, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.31.

² Ibid.

³ Friedrich Jerchow, cited in Pingel, 'Der aufhaltsame Aufschwung', p.48.

⁴ WWA S22 (OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2, Echols, AGWar to OMGUS for Clay, 9.4.1946; Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.124.

⁵ Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.122.

the proceeds of which could have been employed for food imports and so on.¹

Why, then, did Britain not reduce the level of coal exports? It was not as if these 'reparations' benefited Britain's economy; they went largely to other countries and in effect actually cost Britain large amounts of money. After all, if the Zone had been properly recompensed for its coal it could itself have afforded to pay for the large-scale food imports into Germany which became such a severe burden on British finances.²

British policy can be explained almost in one word: France. In 1945 and early 1946 the British were far from seeing the Americans as their principal allies; they were still pursuing the traditional policy of balance of power in Europe to limit a future German threat.³ Cheap exports from Germany were the means to cement a European alliance and France was undoubtedly the most important destination for these exports. Clear confirmation of the intimate relationship between the British export policy and their attitude towards France came in May 1946 at a conference between British experts and the German Zonal Advisory Council to discuss ways of improving German coal production. The Germans called for a moratorium on coal exports to allow them to produce finished goods for export. Over lunch the Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General Bishop, confided to Robert Lehr, Oberpräsident of the North-Rhine Province that a cessation of exports to France would not be in the British interest, because France might interpret a moratorium as an unfriendly act, particularly as elections were pending there.⁴

¹ HStAD NW 53, 272, 'Notizen von der Konferenz im britischen HQ in Lübbecke am 9.5.1945', Düsseldorf 13.5.1948. Although here again, the Germans would have run up against the dollar problem, Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.124.

² Pingel, 'Der aufhaltsame Aufschwung', p.48.

³ *Ibid.*, p.48ff.

⁴ HStAD NW 53, 272, 'Notizen von der Konferenz im britischen HQ in Lübbecke am 9.5.1945', Düsseldorf 13.5.1948.

Beyond the general European goal, the British had other more pressing reasons for supplying the French with cheap German coal. In the first place, there was American pressure. The Americans urged the British to maximise coal exports to France because they were very frightened that economic chaos there would lead to a Communist victory.¹ In addition, the French were growing ever more critical of British policy in the Ruhr and challenging their ability to control the area. As early as November 1945, the French voiced their dissatisfaction to the British.² More worrying still for the British, the French tried to enlist the support of the other Allied powers. In March 1946, the French complained to the US State Department that they were being deprived of Ruhr coal to benefit the German steel industry.³ French pressure came to a head in April because in that month the Export directive based on the Potter-Hyndley report terminated and a new policy would have to be formulated.⁴ General Koenig presented to the quadripartite Allied Control Authority in Berlin a formal complaint about the supplies of coal from the British Zone and at the same time demanded international control over the Ruhr.⁵ The British feared that they might have to surrender control over the Ruhr to some quadripartite body and were keen to keep France sweet at all costs. A whole series of measures was undertaken to placate the French and Britain was clearly not going to jeopardise their success by reducing cheap coal supplies to France.⁶

One option remained. The British could still have used German stocks of food

¹ Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.122.

² PRO FO 942, 182, Economic and Reparations Working Party, Agenda for meeting on 19 November 1945, November 1945.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2 AGWar to OMGUS, 24.3.1946.

⁴ WWA S22 (OMGUS) AG 45-46/103/2, Echols, AGWar, to Clay, April 1946 (exact date illegible), ref: W-85224; PRO FO 942, 183, Duff Cooper to Bevin, 8.4.1946.

⁵ PRO FO 942, 183, Paper, 'Ruhr Coal', no date (April-May 1946).

⁶ Concern at loss of control was apparent as early as November 1945. See PRO FO 942, 182, Economics and Reparations Working Party, Agenda for meeting 19.11.1945, November 1945. For placatory measures see PRO FO 942, 183, EIPS/97/150, letter to Duff Cooper, April 1946; PRO FO 942, 500, EIPS File 1330, 'Coal: technical advisors', *passim*.

and consumer goods, or the existing scanty allocation of coal to German civilian uses, to give the miners favoured treatment. The French continually urged the adoption of this policy. A rigorous transfer of the meagre German resources to the Ruhr might well have ensured a flow of manpower to the mines, but this was just the type of ruthless occupation policy that the British were not prepared to undertake. From the start of the occupation there was a great sensitivity on the part of Military Government to the dangers of mass unrest that might result if too few resources were allowed for general consumption. In August 1945, for example, Montgomery had protested against the Potter-Hyndley recommendations that coal consumption in Germany be kept to an absolute minimum with the argument that 'I consider that unless an adequate interpretation is placed upon the extent of civil and military requirements...grave consequences to the German people can be expected and a measure of trouble arising therefrom which would result in the necessity of increasing our military commitments.'¹ During the following months, the Americans came to believe that the British were, at the cost of favouring mining and ancillary industries, making secret injections of coal into industry generally so as to avoid unemployment and unrest.²

As the food situation in the British Zone became increasingly critical, as morale and public health worsened and productivity declined, the British saw their freedom of manoeuvre grow ever smaller. So strong was their fear of public unrest that the British refused to countenance giving extra rations to the miners even when these were offered by other countries and would not have been at the expense of the normal consumer.³ It is this anxiety that explains why the

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/1, Clay to Warcad for Joint Chiefs of Staffs, 20.8.1945.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS) AG 45-46/103/2, Echols, AGWAR, to Clay, April 1946 (exact date illegible), ref: W-85224.

³ WWA S22(OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2, J.K.Galbraith & WW.Rostow to General (continued overleaf.)

miners suffered a ration cut in March 1946 like everyone else. When, in July, the British reestablished the miners' pre-March rations, they did not make the move public. The US suggested that the increases should be given publicity, but General Robertson replied that he would do so only when he was in a position to give an all round increase in rations.¹ The restoration remained secret and the impact on recruitment was therefore very limited.

The British probably felt that the general public would react particularly sensitively on the issue of priority for the miners precisely because so much of the coal was being exported. Had the production drive been more clearly orientated towards German recovery it seems likely that the British would have been less nervous of giving the miners special status. It is true that, no matter what policy was being adopted towards exports, the severe food shortage in spring 1946 would have disposed the general population against special rations for miners. But the problem of absolute shortages was compounded by the problem of legitimacy and it was above all the level of coal exports which ensured that this was so.

The British thus found themselves in a desperately difficult position. There was no constituency in Germany or in Europe which was prepared to make a sacrifice for the miners, to prime the pump, as it were and begin a virtuous cycle whereby coal production fuelled other industries and economies which in turn would contribute to further growth in mining. The other victorious powers were unwilling to see a reduction in coal exports and yet at the same time were not prepared to provide the Zone with more food or to pay more for its coal. The German population, for its part, would bear no further sacrifice for the sake of

Clay, 31.5.1946; PRO FO 943, 183, Record of a conversation between Mr. Blaisdell, Mr. Galbraith and Mr. Mark Turner, 11.6.1946.

¹ PRO FO 943, 183, Council of foreign ministers. Conversations between British, French and American experts about German coal. First Meeting, 4 July 1946; WWA S22(OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2, Robertson to Draper, 11.7.1946.

an export-orientated coal production programme and the British were neither powerful, respected or ruthless enough to demand that sacrifice of them. When the Potter-Hyndley mission had made its report in June 1945 it had recognised the enormous sacrifices that would be necessary to reach production targets. It had argued that '...if acute unrest is to take place somewhere, as would seem inevitable unless coal is made available, it would surely be better for this to occur in Germany than elsewhere. Should it become necessary to preserve order by shooting this would best occur in Germany'.¹ Yet Military Government was not prepared to shoot.

The pressure for change

What could the British do? Unable and unwilling to force production out of the workforce, they were equally unwilling to demand the sacrifices in or outside Germany that would be necessary to offer the miners a viable incentive. And if they did plump for incentives, who should bear the sacrifice? The choice between neglecting their European allies' urgent need for coal or risking a catastrophe in the British Zone was almost unbearable. In Germany the British found themselves under pressure to suspend or at least reduce coal exports, while at the same time the European Coal Organisation, on behalf of the liberated countries, continually urged the British government to reduce German coal consumption and increase exports to European countries.²

Yet, ultimately, the British would *have* to make a clear choice because their failure to get the coal was retarding recovery in Germany and the liberated

¹ PRO FO 942, 179, Combined Production and Resources Board: London Coal Committee, 'The coal situation in North West Europe. Report by the Potter/Hyndley Mission to North West Europe', June 1945.

² HStAD NW 53, 272, 'Notizen von der Konferenz im britischen HQ in Lübbecke am 9.5.1945'. Düsseldorf 13.5.1948. PRO FO 942, 183, Eaton Griffiths, E.C.O. to Bercomb for Econ Coal, Berlin - several letters, April 1946; PRO FO 943, 183, Memo, 'Informal discussions on German problems', July 1946.

countries alike. Coal was 'the life blood of German economy' and almost as important for Western Europe.¹ In a memorandum on measures to improve the coal position, the American economists J.K.Galbraith and W.W.Rostow wrote of the 'utter seriousness' of the British responsibility.² It is barely an exaggeration to say that the fate of European reconstruction depended on whether the British would be able to regenerate the labour force in the Ruhr mines.

It was therefore inevitable that British policy towards the Ruhr mines would change. Neither politically, economically nor financially could the British afford to continue failing to get the coal. The only question was how quickly the pressure would reach a point where the British were forced to burst through the constraints and adopt a more consistent and successful approach.

¹ Quotation from General Balfour, British Deputy Chief of Staff, at a conference on coal held in May 1946. HStAD NW 53, 272, 'Conference held at Main HQ CCG(BE) on 10 May on the subject of "Methods of Increasing the Coal Output in the British Zone"', official Minutes, May 1946; Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland*, p.140.

² WWA S22(OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2, J.K.Galbraith, WW.Rostow to Clay, 31.5.1946.

Chapter 3: New labour and the drive for coal, 1946-48

1: 'Putting trust in the miner'. The emergence of an incentives policy

The pressure for change

In the first months of 1946 pressure began to build up both inside and outside Germany for a new approach to coal. One prod in this direction came in April 1946, when senior German economic experts, with the backing of industrial and trade union leaders, formulated an alternative to the coercion policy. Hitherto the German opposition to directions had lacked clear exponents. With the creation of the German Economic Advisory Board/ Zentralamt für Wirtschaft (ZfW) in March 1946, a platform emerged for a more forthright German contribution. At a conference held in Düsseldorf at the beginning of April, ZfW experts, trade unionists and industrialists thrashed out their recommendations. Recognising that the problem of labour motivation had to be solved, they called for rations of 3,800 calories for underground workers, special entitlements to consumer goods, productivity bonuses in the form of tobacco allocations, wage and pension increases and a shortening of the working day for miners above ground.¹

A second and for the British more disagreeable stimulus to change came in June 1946, when the Americans refused to begin recruiting for the Ruhr in their zone. Both American and German officials from the US Zone were deeply disturbed by conditions in the Ruhr.² They would not countenance compulsory directions

¹ BAK Z1, 361, 'Bericht zur Kohlenfrage' & 'Gutachten des deutschen Wirtschaftsrats zur Kohlenfrage', 10.4.1946; PRO FO 942, 183, 'German Economic Advisory Board Coal Report', 10.4.1946.

² BAK Z1, 926, Minutes of meeting of Unterausschuß Arbeitslenkung, 11.6.1946; WWA S22(OMGUS), OMGUS Manpower Division, Manpower Allocation Branch, Report on Inspection trip to the Ruhr coal mines, 10.6.1946.

and believed that under present conditions voluntary recruitment had no chance of success.¹

It is not surprising, therefore, that British Military Government itself became increasingly convinced of the need for more incentives. The conclusions that the NGCC had already drawn in autumn 1945 began to spread through the administration. By spring 1946 most important sections in the Control Commission were pressing for a new direction on policy towards the miners. In April 1946, for example, the Food and Agriculture Division endorsed the suggestion that they should receive additional rations.² And in the Control Office, too, the view was making headway that at 'one stage or another we have to put our trust in the miner and permitting him to have the disposal of the extra food allowance, in view of past events, appears a sound way to start the rehabilitation process'.³

This burgeoning consensus amongst the occupation authorities was, however, not enough to effect a change of policy on its own. Questions of food allocations and coal exports were of such critical importance that any decision would have to come from the British Government. This explains the repeated and exasperating experience of French and American officials in Germany that whoever they talked to agreed to the need for incentives but did not have the authority to implement the policy.⁴

What made it possible for the British Government itself eventually to adopt a different approach to the Ruhr mines were the progressive and interrelated

¹ OMGUS Manpower Allocation Branch, Report on Inspection Trip to the Ruhr coal mines, op.cit.

² PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46) 5.

³ PRO FO 943, 183, 'German Economic Advisory Board Coal Report', Cover note from J.Simpson, 25.4.1946.

⁴ PRO FO 943, 183, 'Conversations with Parisot', op.cit.; WWA S22(OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2, Leo Werts to Chief of Staff, 2.7.1946.

changes in American reconstruction policy and Britain's overall international orientation which took place during the spring and summer of 1946. As is well known, the British moved towards a more open recognition of their financial and economic dependence on the US.¹ The results of this were threefold. Freed from some of their dependence on France, the British were able to give Germany's own need for coal a higher priority in their general economic strategy. A sign of their disassociation from the French was that by the autumn the British were refusing to engage in formal talks on coal matters with France.² Secondly, the Americans' new commitment to rapid recovery, as proclaimed in the Byrnes speech of September 1946, brought with it the offer of more help for the British Zone, which would make an incentive strategy less burdensome to introduce. Finally, Byrnes' public statement made it easier for the Germans to see the coal drive as part of a general recovery programme and thus gave Military Government the legitimacy to favour the miners with incentives.

A summer of cautious initiatives

In this changing climate, the British tentatively explored a number of possible strategies for solving the coal crisis. One option was to reduce or suspend coal exports, an idea mooted in June by Sholto Douglas, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Zone.³ The Control Office and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster accepted the desirability of a moratorium, recognising that it would improve miners' morale, allow supplies and goods to be produced for the mining industry and in general provide a desperately needed injection into the British Zone's economy. In July, the British approved the formation of a quadripartite

¹ Pingel, 'Der aufhaltsame Aufschwung', p.48.

² For French overtures see a series of documents in PRO FO 943, 183, E 1/7/4 106ff. On continuing problem of coal allocation see FO 943, 183, 'Brief on special points arising from coal experts report for use in Foreign Secretary's discussion with the French', October 1946.

³ Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.121.

experts' committee to investigate coal production in all four zones of Germany but primarily in the Ruhr. At the meetings of this committee, as well as at the tripartite meetings with American and French representatives which preceded it, the British tested the waters of international opinion over the possibility of an exports moratorium.¹ Though the Americans involved in the talks were favourable, France, supported by US State Department officials in Washington, was hostile.² In the end, the British government decided not to risk opprobrium in Washington and Paris and left the export level unchanged.³

Another option was to concentrate existing German resources on the Ruhr. Control Office and Control Commission grappled with ways of favouring the miners without offending the rest of the population.⁴ Though the general food situation was improving, they remained very nervous about how the public would react, particularly as intelligence reports suggested that giving miners extra rations would have negative repercussions elsewhere.⁵ To make matters worse, the German authorities were giving the British contradictory signals. At the same time as experts from the ZfW advocated the rigorous diversion of manufactured goods and foodstuffs from other consumers to the miners, the *Oberpräsidenten* of North-Rhine and Westphalia stated categorically that the normal consumer could not be called upon to make any further sacrifices.⁶ The result was that when, in July, the miners' ration was restored to its pre-March

¹ PRO FO 943, 183, Council of Foreign Ministers. Conversations between British, French and American experts about German coal, First Meeting 4.7.1946.

² *Ibid.* and PRO FO 943, 183, 'Informal discussions on German coal problems', July 1946; Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.122.

³ PRO FO 943, 183, Mark Turner to Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 20.6.1946; Extract from the Conclusions of the 9th Meeting of the Overseas Reconstruction Committee, 21.6.1946: '3: Sitn of the German coal industry'; Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.122.

⁴ PRO FO 943, 183, Memo, 'German Coal Production. Meeting at Norfolk House...', 22.6.1946.

⁵ WWA S22(OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2, Robertson to Draper, 11.7.1946.

⁶ Abelshausen, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, pp. 37-8; Minutes of 'Conference held at Main HQ CCG(BE) on 10 May..', *op.cit.*

level, the move was kept secret and indeed remained so throughout the summer.¹

By September, the British felt inclined to be bolder in their support for the Ruhr. The fusion of the British and American zones created a more optimistic and supportive climate in Germany. The food situation was much less critical, thanks not least to sizeable grain imports.² In addition, the quadripartite Experts' Committee submitted its report at the end of August and the British were keen to be seen responding to its recommendations in the hope that support might be forthcoming from other powers, particularly the Americans.³ Thus in September 1946, the British announced an increase in miners' rations to 3,800 calories. In October, the face workers' ration was raised to 4000 calories and further rises were to follow.⁴ Finally, miners' wages were increased by 20 percent in November.

Whilst debating whether to commit these resources to the Ruhr, the British had also been experimenting with yet another option: universal conscription. Attempts to obtain four-power support proved abortive,⁵ but within the British Zone the idea was given a boost when the Oberpräsident of the North-Rhine province, Robert Lehr, suggested that all youngsters between the ages of 15 and 25 might be made liable for a period of compulsory service in the mines, 'eine Art Ehrendienstpflicht', as Lehr put it.⁶ Although the proposal was bitterly condemned by Lehr's opposite number in Westphalia, Rudolf Amelunxen, who regarded it as the beginning of a 'new militarism', the British were delighted at

¹ See chapter 2, p.101.

² Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.127.

³ The British had found the Americans' attitude in the committee 'not very helpful' (interview with Henry Collins, 29.6.1984).

⁴ PRO FO 943, 186, Paper, 'The coal industry in the British Zone', April 1947.

⁵ PRO FO 1005, 776, Manpower Directorate Committee of Labour Supply and Manpower Allocation. Minutes of 30th and 31st Meeting, April/May 1946.

⁶ 'Notizen von der Konferenz im britischen HQ in Lübbecke am 9.5.1946', op.cit.

the possibility that conscription might now enjoy German support.¹ In June 1946, Manpower Division began to make preparations for the scheme and in a secret directive to the labour exchanges ordered them to form a separate 'Coal Mining Register' of all men born in 1926, 1927 and 1928.²

Here, as in the incentives question, the British proceeded extremely cautiously. Trade union leaders were consulted, a formal request for views was made to the Zonal Advisory Council (ZAC), the top German body in the Zone, and a major public opinion poll was carried out.³ Since both general public and unions proved hostile to the idea,⁴ it was never implemented, although the fact that the British did not allow the special coal mining register to be dissolved until May 1947 suggests that they were keeping their options open.⁵

In any case, the plan for universal conscription rapidly became redundant as the new incentives improved labour supply and motivation. The effect of higher rations on production was, in fact, pretty well instantaneous: hard coal output averaged 180,000t per day in September and by 8 November had risen to 193,500t, the highest daily output since the end of the war.⁶ In March 1946, 99 percent of newcomers to the mines had been conscripted, but, by December, 85 percent were volunteers.⁷ The overall number of recruits rose steadily. More important, observers in the Ruhr commented on the willingness to work of the

¹ Ibid.

² PRO FO 943, 190, Manpower Division, 'Labour Supply for Coal Mining', 29.6.1946; PRO FO 1005, 1824, Labour Supply Branch Directive 17, 19.6.1946.

³ Parlamentsarchiv, Bonn (PA), File 1, 203, ZAC P(46) 93; PRO FO 1005, 1738, German Personnel Research Branch, Intelligence Division, Social Survey No.1, 'Attitudes of Germans to coal mining'; 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit.

⁴ Social Survey No.1, op.cit.; PA 1, 203, 'Stellungnahme der Gewerkschaft IG Bergbau, 15.11.1946.

⁵ StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 47, LAA NRW Außenstelle Westfalen-Lippe, Circular to directors of labour exchanges, 2.5.1947.

⁶ PRO FO 943, 185, Note by Coal Branch, ECOSC/P(46)45: 'Progress of coal production drive', November 1946.

⁷ August Niehues, 'Ruhrbergbau und Arbeitsvermittlung', *Arbeitsblatt für die britische Zone*, 1947, 1, 3, pp.88-903.

volunteers, in marked contrast to the conscripts.¹ Almost one and a half years after submission of the Potter-Hyndley report, the tide had begun to turn.

Prisoners of war

One other minor but revealing example of the way in which the Americans' new commitment to recovery and Britain's closer ties to the US created greater freedom of manoeuvre in the coal question is provided by policy towards German POW's employed in foreign mines.

Between them, France and Belgium employed some 90,000 German POW's mining coal.² If this group were returned to Germany, it was large enough to make a significant difference to the labour position in the Ruhr. Furthermore, because of the Ruhr's superior geological conditions, the POW's could be expected to be twice as productive there as in France or Belgium.³ Yet up till summer 1946, British approaches to the two powers over the possible return of the men remained extremely tentative.⁴

By the end of the year, however, the Control Office felt more confident and in addition able to enlist American help. Certainly, there was still some nervousness about antagonising the French but, as a senior official of the Ministry of Power noted in January 1947, the Americans had 'screwed up their courage' to the point where they were prepared to make official representations.⁵ The pressure was sufficient to galvanise first Belgium and then France into

¹ WWA K1, 803/03, Report of Hamm labour exchange for December 1946.

² Figures in PRO FO 943, 190, Paris to Foreign Office, 22.1.1947 - for France; Telegram G/339, Control Office to Berlin, 5.3.1947 - for Belgium; PRO FO 1005, 1821, Manpower Interim Report, 9.8.1946- for Britain.

³ PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46) 11, 'Return of POW's from France and Belgium', October 1946.

⁴ Ibid. and PRO FO 943, 183, Council of Foreign Ministers. Experts' 2nd Meeting, July 1946.

⁵ PRO FO 943, 190, J.H.Brook, Ministry of Fuel and Power to J.Simpson, Control Office, 9.1.1947.

taking steps to release their captives.¹

As well as the changed international climate, the incentives themselves had contributed to this outcome. France and Belgium agreed to release the conscripts in part because they recognised that the new incentives policy increased the chances of getting the ex-POW's to work in the Ruhr. Until the miners' ration and wage increases, most of the POW's had shown little desire to work in the mines after release,² an understandable fact given that 90 percent of those employed in the Belgian mines and possibly even more of those in France were not miners by profession but had gained their experience of coal mining as prisoners.³ As conditions in the Ruhr improved, the ex-POW's showed greater willingness to work there, so that France and Belgium lost some of their anxiety about releasing the rest.⁴

Added incentives

It is hard to say what would have happened to the flow of new labour had no further incentives been introduced. It is probable that the mines would have continued to attract workers away from other Ruhr industries, at least for a while, but that the rations on their own would not have been enough to draw large numbers from areas further afield. Since essential industries in the Ruhr, and hence the economy as a whole, would begin to suffer if mining recruits continued to come almost exclusively from the immediate vicinity of the mines, it was vital to offer something more.⁵

This was one reason why the British considered introducing a coupon system to

¹ PRO FO 943, 190, Eaton Griffiths to J.H.Brook, 30.6.1947.

² HStad, NW 73, 135, 13th Meeting of the Coordinating Committee, 12.6.1947.

³ PRO FO 943, 190, Telegram G/339, Control Office to Berlin, 5.3.1947.

⁴ PRO FO 943, 190, Eaton Griffiths to J.H.Brook, 30.6.1947.

⁵ HStad NW53, 465, Bate, NRW Manpower Dept. to NRW Reconstruction Minister (WAM), 24.2.1947.

enable the miners to obtain scarce consumer goods. In August 1946, the Americans had introduced such a scheme for (the admittedly small number of) miners in their zone and they offered the British help in supplying goods to develop a similar programme.¹ At the beginning of November, members of ECOSC, the NGCC, Manpower Division and other sections of Military Government met to discuss the issue and outlined a provisional solution.² Discussions began with the GMSO and the miners' union, the Industrieverband Bergbau (IVB), and in mid-November the GMSO submitted a more detailed proposal for a coupon system.³ In December, the head of ECOSC, Cecil Weir, invited the German coal working party (Arbeitsgruppe Kohle), an organisation founded by the new bizonal Executive Committee for Economics (Verwaltungsrat für Wirtschaft), to help finalise proposals and in January the introduction of the Points System was announced, making headlines in almost every country in the western world.⁴

The basic outline of the System was very simple: it consisted of special coupons and points with which the miners were able to buy goods otherwise virtually unobtainable in Germany, except on the black market. The coupons for spirits and tobacco were graded according to the type of job, face workers naturally receiving the biggest allowance. Points were in relation to the wage, although there was a guaranteed minimum as long as a worker did not miss shifts.⁵

¹ PRO FO 943, 185, Doc 121A, Bevin to Byrnes, 11.11.1946.

² DGBA, File' Gewerkschaftliches Zonensekretariat, Britische Zone, 1947, 1', VFW to Economics Ministry, NRW and others, 25.3.1947, Appendix 3: 'Minutes of a meeting held at Melitta Factory on Monday 4 November 1946'.

³ Ibid., appendix 7: 'Vorschlag "Punktsystem" vom 16.11.1946..'

⁴ OBADA 18000/294/47, 'Bericht der Arbeitsgruppe Kohle über die Tätigkeit seit Anfang Dezember 1946', Düsseldorf 14.1.1947.

⁵ PRO FO 943, 185, NGCC Production Branch, Memorandum, 'Points System', 14.1.1947; Föllmer-Edling, 'Die Politik des IVB', p.33ff.

The Points System: accident or design?

The Points System attracted much attention abroad because it was the first time that a major reward for success had been offered the Germans and because it appeared to be the most overt indication hitherto of Allied commitment to rapid German recovery. Yet at least some of this attention was misplaced. As the previous account has made clear, the scheme was in many ways merely the logical extension of policies already tried and tested. Encouraged by the favourable impact of the autumn ration rises (and by the fact that the rest of the population had shown no violent aversion to the miners' privileges), the British had simply gone further down the same road.

The one really new aspect was the degree of privilege now accorded the miner. Striking though this was, it represented far less of an Allied commitment than appeared at first sight. In the first place, the resources given the miner were obtained at the cost of other German consumers and not of the foreign recipients of German coal.¹ No extra coal was made available to produce the miners' consumer goods. They were simply withdrawn from the general civilian stocks. In spring 1947, 20 percent of all textiles available to the Germans went to the miners, or in other words one sixtieth of the population received one fifth of the goods. While in April 1947 civilian rations fell to a low of 900 calories per day in some parts of the Ruhr, the miners were receiving 3,000 calories.²

Secondly, this degree of favouritism was not really what the Allies wanted. The original British proposal had been to limit the miners to four times the normal civilian allocation; in fact, as the above figures show, in textiles and other

¹ PRO FO 943, 185, 'Miners' Points Scheme', Extract from BIB/M (47) 3, 3.3.1947; Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.189.

² PRO FO 943, 185, 'Miners' Points Scheme', Extract from BIB/M (47) 3, 3.3.1947.

supplies the miners received 8-10 times the general rate.¹ What had happened was that the scheme subsequently worked out between GMSO, IVB and NGCC linked the amount of incentives not to the total volume of available supplies but instead to the miners' wages. The original ceiling of four times the average civilian allocation was thus removed. Under the new proposal the top limit to incentives was governed solely by the wages earned.² The GMSO and the IVB hoped that a share of the extra coal produced could be used to pay for imports of food and consumer goods and also to provide fuel for Germany's consumer goods industry; thus the miners would 'pay for' their own privileges and the special allocations would not be at the cost of the ordinary consumer.³

Then, in December 1946, it became clear that other parts of Military Government and the Control Office were hostile to the idea of a guaranteed coal contingent for Points System goods.⁴ In view of their foreign commitments, the British were not prepared to make any guarantee as to the amount of coal that could be made available to pay for imports nor to give a firm undertaking that extra coal would be injected in to the German consumer goods industries.⁵ The scheme might well have been dropped at that point since it suited neither the Germans nor the British administration. The Germans were hesitant to endorse a programme which could end up being supplied exclusively from existing German stocks at the expense of other consumers, while many British

¹ The actual degree of privilege varied from commodity to commodity. In respect of bicycle inner-tubes, for instance, the miners were almost 20 times better supplied than other industrial groups, while their shoe supplies were only 4 times above normal. PA 2, 558, VfW, Memorandum, 'betr.: Anteil des Bergarbeiter-Punktsystems an der Gesamtversorgung des Vereinigten Wirtschaftsgebietes', 23.2.1948.

² VfW to Economics Ministry, NRW and others, 25.3.1947, appendix 7, op.cit.

³ Ibid.

⁴ OBADA I 8000/294/47, 'Bericht der Arbeitsgruppe Kohle über die Tätigkeit seit Anfang Dezember 1946', Düsseldorf 14.1.1947.

⁵ DGBA, File 'Gewerkschaftliches Zonensekretariat, Britische Zone, 1947, 1'. VfW, 'Protokoll der Sitzung über die Durchführung des Punktsystems am 27.1.1947', Minden 28.1.1947; OBADA I 8000/ 542/47, Copy of a letter from Wirtschaftsminister Nölting to the executive of the IVB, 13.2.1947; PRO FO 943, 187, Telegram from Foreign Office, German Section, to Control Office, Berlin, 25.7.1947.

officials regarded as dangerous and immoral such heavy favouritism as might well ensue. The deputy Military Governor himself considered the scheme 'opportunist'.¹ Both sides recognised, however, that non-implementation might have a serious impact on production because news of the scheme had already been leaked to the miners. Indeed, as early as August 1946, August Halbfell had been suggesting to senior mining officials that a points system would soon be introduced in the British Zone.² In an attempt to counteract the dangerous assumption that all was settled, the NGCC temporarily forbade public discussion of the matter.³ This was to no avail so that it was deemed too dangerous to disappoint the miners' expectations after so much publicity. With a heavy heart, the German authorities endorsed the Points System and agreed, if necessary, to allocate all available consumer goods to it alone.⁴

In other words the scheme actually came into being as the result of political pressures, perhaps even of a little political brinkmanship from GMSO and IVB, who may well have deliberately raised miners' expectations in order to put pressure on the authorities. It was not the result of the careful cost-benefit analysis of diverting so many resources to the miners. This seems to have been a characteristic feature of the post-war controlled economy.⁵ It meant in this case that the scheme went into operation without any proof that the necessary stores were available and, over the following months, supply problems continually threatened to undermine the programme's credibility.

¹ PRO FO943, 185, Extract from BIB/M(47)3, 3.3.1947. Clay concurred in this judgement.

² WWA F35, 493, Report of a talk by LAA President Halbfell in Herne, 9.8.1946.

³ OBADA I 8000/2624/46, GMSO to OBAD, 2.12.1946.

⁴ DGBA, File 'Gewerkschaftliches Zonensekretariat, Britische Zone, 1947, 1', Report of a Meeting of the Sonderausschuss at the VW in Minden, 27.1.1947.

⁵ See chapter 4, p.181ff.

2: Bringing home the bacon. Labour, incentives and output 1947

Turning the tide

Despite this uncertain beginning, the Points System transformed the labour supply position in the mines. Small wonder, when according to the estimate of a top bank official in Düsseldorf, a miner's real income was equivalent to a gross annual salary of RM 300,000.¹ Within weeks of the critical shortage of labour in the collieries, other industries were complaining about labour losses to the pits.² Whereas 61,988 men had been taken on in 1946, the number rose to 87,235 in 1947. More important, these new miners did not disappear within the first few days. Less men left the pits in 1947 than in 1946, despite the higher intake.³ Even during the spring food crisis, the monthly level of recruitment remained above and the monthly labour losses below the average figures for the previous year.⁴ The new measures called forth not only the labour reserves in the British Zone but also thousands of young men in the Soviet Zone, many of them seeking to evade Russian registration of labour.⁵

To attain its Zonal production goal of 400,000t a day by 1949,⁶ the NGCC had calculated that 300,000 underground workers would be needed in the Ruhr.⁷ Workforce growth in 1947 was well in line with this manpower target. By the end of the year the underground workforce had increased to 240,101 compared

¹ Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948, op.cit.

² PRO FO 943, 185, Simpson to H.E.Collins, 4.3.1947.

³ Ges.Verb., StdKW, Unpublished table: 'Belegschaftswechsel. Arbeiter Untertage. Ruhr'.

⁴ Based on figures in OBADA I 8010 vols 2,3,4 & 5, OBAD Lageberichte.

⁵ OBADA I8010/2189/47, OBAD Lagebericht for July 1947.

⁶ PRO FO943, 185, F.H.Harrison, Fuel and Power Division, 'The Forward planning of coal production and distribution', 3.3.1947; report on a meeting on 23 January in Villa Hügel, in OBADA I8010/433/47, Lagebericht for Januar 1947.

⁷ 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.23.

with 193,069 at the end of 1946¹ and it would have risen even more swiftly if shortages of housing and other supplies had not limited the mines' capacity to absorb newcomers. 1948 needed to be only as good as 1947 for the 300,000 figure to be attained. This growth was probably the biggest single year's increase in the history of Ruhr mining, without parallel even in the explosive growth phase at the end of the 19th century,² and a sign of just how irresistible were the twin sirens of extra rations and scarce consumer goods.

The influx of new labour overcame the worst of the coal shortage. As early as autumn 1947, experts involved in the distribution and allocation of coal observed that output was beginning to ease coal's stranglehold on the economy.³ In a congratulatory speech to the NRW *Landtag* General Robertson confirmed the connection between labour supply and production when he noted that, "Die Steigerung der Kohlenförderung ist größtenteils auf einen erhöhten Arbeitseinsatz in den Bergwerken zurückzuführen".⁴

The productivity gap

Nevertheless, the story of coal from autumn 1946 onwards is not the success story it seems. Undeniable though the Points System's effectiveness was at expanding the workforce, production and productivity lagged far behind expectations. The British had, not unreasonably, expected the underground miner's efficiency to rise by 15 to 20 percent in the course of 1947.⁵ This would

¹ *ZdKW*, vol 1, p.20 & vol 7, p.32.

² The 19th century statistics do not distinguish between the arrival of newcomers to the *industry* and movement from colliery to colliery, so it is impossible to say how many genuine newcomers arrived in any one year. What is clear is that actual workforce *growth* never reached the 1947 level. Brüggemeier, *Leben vor Ort.*, pp.271-2, 277.

³ BAK Z40,2, Deutsches Kohlenstatistisches Amt, 'Die Kohlenwirtschaft zu Beginn des Winters 1947/1948', Essen, November 1947.

⁴ 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.70.

⁵ There are no recorded productivity targets for the end of 1947, but British expectations can be established by looking at their projected workforce and production figures.

have brought shift output up to between 1.4t and 1.5t a head by the end of the year, a figure equivalent to around three quarters of 1938 productivity. In fact, average output/man/shift. in 1947 showed virtually no improvement over the previous year's and was actually somewhat *below* the figures attained at the end of 1946 (see table 2)! Despite the Points System and other incentives, the underground workforce was operating at barely more than 60 percent of pre-war efficiency.¹

As a result, production failed to meet target. By the end of the year, the mines in the British Zone were supposed to be producing 300,000t a day, yet for the period October 1947 - March 1948, average daily production was only about 266,000t;² in other words the increase since the end of 1946 had been little over half that hoped for. In the period up to the currency reform, the gap between target and reality widened. In spring 1948, the coal shortage became, briefly, as pressing as it had ever been. By June 1948, daily production had not gone much beyond 285,000t when it should have been well on its way to 400,000t.³

Thus, once again, the enormous priority given to coal had not produced the desired results. At first sight this is even more inexplicable than in the early period, for the miners had now been offered the incentives that were earlier so sorely lacking. On closer inspection, however, the production drive exposed fundamental weaknesses in the political and economic system of the occupation period. The characteristic deficiencies of a fixed-price economy were joined and exacerbated by the tensions arising from the relationship between occupying power and subject people. In the ostensibly 'controlled' economy', resources, management and labour proved, as this and the following chapter will

¹ Calculated from *ZdKW*, 7, p.44.

² Calculated from the monthly averages in *ZdKW*, 4, p.3. Production figures for British Zone.

³ *Ibid.*

demonstrate, to be largely beyond control.

Table 2: Workforce, production and productivity 1946-1947¹

<u>Month</u>	<u>Workforce size</u> <u>at end of month</u> <u>(underground)</u>	<u>average daily</u> <u>production</u> <u>(metric tons)</u>	<u>Output/man-shift</u> <u>(underground) (t)</u>	<u>ration</u> <u>period</u> <u>beginning³</u>	<u>calories</u> <u>rec'd²</u>
(1938 =	228,813	416,300	1.970)		
<u>1946</u>					
October	186,421		1.227	14.10.46	3672
November	189,812		1.221	10.11	3373
December	193,069		1.231	9.12	3834
<u>1947</u>					
January	198,877	198,000	1.234	6.1.47	3586
February	203,288	212,800	1.253	3.2	3823
March	205,394	218,500	1.258	3.3	3645
April	207,391	204,300	1.199	31.3	3628
May	209,461	201,100	1.176	28.4	3643
June	212,599	203,400	1.181	26.5	3570
July	217,940	208,900	1.192	23.6	3767
August	223,700	220,800	1.214	21.7	3795
September	227,577	224,800	1.229	18.8	3837
				15.9	3929
October	232,627	229,400	1.198	13.10	3855
November	238,267	260,700	1.212	10.11	3833
December	240,101	244,600	1.230	8.12	3780
<u>1948</u>					
Jan	240,755	237,100	1.196	5.1.48	3637
March	242,916	269,600	1.307		
June	244,916	265,800	1.307		

Maximum production or maximum efficiency?

How much more could the British have achieved? One thing not in doubt is that their general strategy of recruiting as many men as possible was the best way to achieve a rapid increase in production. Equally certain was, as the Ruhr mines had several times been reminded in the course of the 20th Century, that the effect of rapid recruitment was to depress or at least retard the progress of individual

¹ Source: ZdKW 1, pp.20, 28; 4, pp.2; 7, pp.32, 44; WWA S22(OMGUS) CO HIST BR 3/404-1/8, Telegram from Wright to Adcock, 26.2.1948.

² Rations for underground workers.

³ Ration periods were exactly 28 days. They are aligned in the table with the month in which most of the ration period fell.

output.¹ The rationale of mass recruitment was that the costs to average individual output would be outweighed by the gains in workforce size. The highest production possible under the circumstances would be obtained, but at the cost of some inefficiency.

Quite a lot of the inefficiency of the post-war period falls into this category of the unavoidable and economically justifiable consequence of a mass recruitment strategy. For example, to obtain so much labour so swiftly, the selection criteria had to be fairly lax. At the behest of Military Government, the mines continued to take 'alles, was Arm und Bein hatte'. Indeed, in the course of 1946 the British had raised the upper age limit to 45.² Clearly, the recruitment of unskilled men over 40 was not likely to improve productivity.³

Even more important, mass recruitment could not help but lead to a fairly minimal training programme. For a start, there were simply not enough experienced men and pit deputies to provide adequate supervision or training.⁴ Similarly, the training faces were not big enough to absorb anything like all the newcomers. In any case, a recruitment strategy which maximised workforce size rather than productivity made sense only if the recruited labour was brought into production rapidly. It was no doubt in tacit recognition of this that the Obad's revised training code, which came into force at the beginning of 1947, was almost as vague as its predecessor.⁵ The Inspectorate itself was to

¹ Eg. after the first world war and again in the second half of the 1930's. See Tschirbs, *Tarfpolitik*, p.251; Wisotzky, *Der Ruhrbergbau im Dritten Reich*, p.231ff.

² PRO FO 943, 185, British Monthly Report on Implementation of Agreed Recommendations of Part II of Coal Experts' Report, 28.10.1946; PRO 943, 183, Extract. ACA Economic Directorate, Minute of 49th Meeting, 23.5.1946, Annex B: Statement of the British member.

³ At some point in 1947, the upper age limit must have been reduced to 40 again, since this was the figure approved by the Washington conference in the summer.

⁴ Public Opinion Research Organisation (ed.), *The mining trainee 1947: A social survey*, Bielefeld 1948, p.27; OBADA 18010/2523/47, OBAD Lagebericht for August and September 1947.

⁵ OBADA I 6307/1993/46, OBAD, Bestimmungen über die Ausbildung und den Einsatz bergfremder Personen im Steinkohlenbergbau, Dortmund, 5.2.1947.

acknowledge this in later years.¹ In practice, therefore, the newcomers' induction was only marginally less rudimentary than in 1946.² Local branches of the Inspectorate reported that, 'Oberstes Bestreben der Betriebsleitungen ist es noch immer, die Bergfremden so rasch wie möglich einzusetzen, was.. noch immer auf Kosten einer planvollen Anlegung geschieht'.³

For all these reasons, the high rate of recruitment necessarily resulted in less than optimum individual productivity and this was perfectly acceptable. Given the objective value of coal to the German and wider European economies, a certain amount of labour inefficiency was more than justified. Not quite so easy to justify were the high human costs of the strategy. As table 3 demonstrates, the minimal training levels resulted in an accident rate almost as disastrous as the previous year's.⁴ A high proportion of these accidents involved newcomers. At the Emscher-Lippe mine, for example, new miners made up 14 percent of the workforce but accounted for 46 percent of all accidents.⁵ Yet so much depended on getting the coal that possibly even these costs could be excused.

¹ OBADA I 6307/1840/49, Memorandum, 13.8.1949.

² BBA 8, 401, Note from the management, ref. D/DI 1, to sections B11/B21, 'Betr. Einsatz Umschüler', 25.7.1947.

³ OBADA I 6307/1941/46, BA Herne to OBAD, 28.6.1947.

⁴ It should be born in mind that accident reporting was much higher than normal; all observers, including the unions, were agreed that miners were taking time off for accidents that under normal circumstances would not have kept them away from work. Even so, it is a safe assumption that there were genuinely at least twice as many light accidents in 1947 as in 1938. In the case of more serious accidents, reporting behaviour had little influence and the figures show an increase of 50% over 1938.

⁵ BBA 35, 235, Minutes of Belegschaftsversammlung, 1.6.1947; See also OBADA I 6307/2420/48, OBAD to all Bergämter, 16.9.1948.

Table 3: Accidents per 100,000 shifts¹

Year	Accidents causing absence from work for		Fatal accidents
	up to 4 weeks	more than 4 weeks	
1938	29.69	22.00	0.53
1946	97.44	33.80	1.22 ²
1947	93.27	32.71	0.59
1948	88.03	28.32	0.56
1949	79.57	18.31	0.48

Contrasting the performance of established and new labour

The point is, however, that a lot of of the inefficiency in the 1946-'48 period does not fall into this category of the unavoidable consequence of mass recruitment. To prove this we need only contrast the output of new and experienced men. It is true that in Werner Abelshauser's authoritative history of economic reconstruction the productivity of skilled miners is shown as having risen substantially from 1946 to 1947 while the newcomers' output stagnated.³ The argument draws on OMGUS statistics which appear to indicate that the experienced men (Hauer) increased their output by over 10 percent from 1946 and attained 80 percent of 1938 o.m.s.⁴ Were this so, it would indicate that the British could not have been expected to do much better given the pace of recruitment. However, the terminology in the original Anglo-American statistics is misleading. The English language term 'hewer' was in fact being used to denote all face workers, whether experienced or new.⁵ It was actually impossible, using the normal statistical returns, to distinguish between Hauer and other face workers. (In 1948, in order to establish how new miners compared with experienced men, the Deutsche Kohlenbergbau-Leitung⁶ had to

¹ Compiled from OBAD Lageberichte in OBAD I 8010, Vols 2,3 & 4.

² This jump is accounted for mainly by the Grimberg disaster.

³ Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland*, p.140-1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Collins, 'Progress in rebuilding the coal-mining industry in Western Germany', *Transactions of the Institution of Mining Engineers*, 1947-8, 107, 8, p.19, which properly refers to the same figures as face worker o.m.s.

⁶ See below, p.149ff.

use special statistical returns, collected by a small number of individual pits).¹

Properly interpreted, the OMGUS figures point in a quite different direction. They show that productivity at the face recovered much better than efficiency in the rest of the mines. From other sources we know that new recruits were *concentrated* at the face. In the two collieries belonging to the Gute Hoffnungshütte, for example, statistics show that new miners made up 42 percent of the face workers in one case and 65.9 percent in the other but only 18.7 percent and 40 percent respectively of the underground workforce as a whole. In the Hibernia mines, at the end of 1948, three quarters of all new miners were concentrated at the face. From the following year's statistics we can see that about 40 percent of all face workers were newcomers² and over 50 percent of those directly involved in coal getting itself.³ In other words, the concentration of newcomers was highest at the very point which was achieving the best results - suggesting that their inexperience was not the only, indeed not the major factor depressing productivity.

Why was it then that a group so immensely privileged as the miners could not be induced to higher output? As a senior US official complained, 'Large proportions of raw materials [have] been diverted from the German economy to an exclusive set of workers, who [have] not in return delivered the coal'.⁴ The results achieved were so poor that some sections of Military Government considered removing the Points System altogether.⁵

¹ WWA F35, 3511, DKBL, Circular No. I 11, 7.2.1948, appendix: G.Rauer, Die Entwicklung der Leistung unter Tage und der individuellen Leistung des Bergmannes im Ruhrbergbau in den Jahren 1946 - 1947.

² I.e., adults who had been in the mining industry less than three years.

³ See, for GHH, BBA 30, 34, GHH mines' annual report for period 1948-1949; 32,1509, 'Bergmännische Zahlenberichte' 1948 & 1949, table 'Umschülerbewegung'.

⁴ WWA S22(OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/103-2/16, Minutes of meeting of Working Party on the Miners' Points Scheme, 21.8.1947.

⁵ *Ibid.* & meeting on 11.9.1947.

Coal and calories

One key problem was that, despite the incentives programme, food was periodically in short supply. In 1947, there were two food crises in the Ruhr, one in spring and another one in December. To a certain extent the miners' rations were directly affected. The fluctuations in calorific content, though relatively small, could still make considerable impact and, in addition, the figures masked more serious drops in the quality of the ration. In January-February 1948, for example, the heavy worker's ration was adequate in terms of calories (3,875 per day) yet very poor in quality terms. There was no meat at all, the fat ration was not fully met and a good deal of the calories came in the form of cereals and sugar.¹ In general however, the miners' ration held up reasonably well. In flat contrast to this, the rations allocated to miners' families and to other Ruhr 'civillians' (i.e. those not in special labour categories) fell to absolutely catastrophic depths, far below the subsistence level. The official civilian ration in 1947 was around 1550 calories a day, itself insufficient to maintain body-weight. In April 1947, the actual ration in a number of Ruhr towns averaged 970 calories. In May, citizens in Bochum were treated to just 629 calories. By July the Ruhr average was still only 1,260.²

These crises were accompanied by major reversals in the upward trend of production (see table 2). Until March 1947, productivity had risen rapidly but in April and May the trend was reversed abruptly and productivity fell well below the levels it had attained *before* the introduction of the Points System. Production was hit not just by a general fall in productivity and attendance but also by sporadic strikes from February 1947 onwards, often led by miners'

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), CO HIST BR 3/404-1/7, UK/US Coal Control Group (UK/USCCG), Report to the Bipartite Control Office for February 1948.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), CO HIST BR 3/406-1/22, NGCC, Notes on NGCC; Abelshausen, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, p.40.

wives.¹ In April the Oberbergamt noted 'eine wachsende Unruhe und Gereiztheit unter den Belegschaften'.² Protests and strikes grew in number, culminating in a 24-hour protest strike on 4 April in which 300,000 miners took part.³ At the end of April, the NGCC reported that coal production estimates had had to be reduced dramatically. Instead of the original prediction of 292,193t a day by September, the expectation now was only 260,000t.⁴ It was not until August that daily production attained the performance of March. A renewed drop occurred in the December-January period, forcing a further revision of Military Government's estimates.⁵

It is evident from all this that the Points Scheme and the extra rations for miners had not solved the problem of incentives. It was a striking indication of the scale of the food shortages in post-war Germany, that rations in the Ruhr, the crucible of German recovery, should fall to such devastatingly low levels. Of course, the authorities could have introduced even more rigorous prioritisation within the Ruhr or within the British Zone than they did and have increased the disparity between miners' and the rest of the population. This might have maintained coal production at a higher level. Yet the option of greater inequality and particularly the introduction of special privileges for the Ruhr area as a whole was rejected by the Military Governors because they felt the limit of what was morally justifiable and politically advisable had been

¹ OBADA I 8010/723/47, OBAD Lageberichte for Februar 1947 and March.

² OBADA I 8010/1343/47, OBAD Lagebericht for April.

³ Michael Clarke, 'Die Gewerkschaftspolitik der KPD 1945-1951, dargestellt am Beispiel des "Industrieverbandes Bergbau/Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau" im Ruhrgebiet', (Staatsexamensarbeit, Bochum University, 1982), p.35.

⁴ PRO FO 1005, 380, COPROD P(47)23, NGCC, 'Forward estimates of coal production', 29.4.1947.

⁵ The December figures in table 2 may appear to be contradictory in that productivity rose, the workforce grew and yet daily production fell. The missing variable is absenteeism. Productivity is calculated on the basis of shifts worked and not the number of workers on the company's books. If absenteeism rises sharply, it is perfectly possible for production to fall even though both the number of workers on the books and shift productivity have grown.

reached. General Clay argued that there 'can be no justification for a greater ration call-up for the entire Ruhr area. Even the additional food for miners is causing increased resentment in other areas and labor ranks. It was not approved by German administration and had to be ordered by Military Government. We do have political objectives in Germany and such favouritism to Ruhr area [sic] would be most damaging...We can not let economic palliatives for specific areas destroy over-all effort and I am convinced special treatment for Ruhr area will so result.'¹ The only concession that was made was to declare the Ruhr a special priority area with respect to any supplementary imports of food that would be made in future, a move which eventually had some impact on ration levels in the area.²

In the minds of the many anxious observers in the Ruhr, there was no doubt that the fall in the civilian ration was the primary cause of the drop in production.³ They could point to the fact that married men, who felt obliged to give an ever increasing portion of their extra rations to their undernourished families, were directly physically hit by the ration cuts.⁴ Yet, though the food shortages were undoubtedly the *trigger* for the deterioration in productivity, the causes were more complex. As in the earlier period, the cuts' psychological impact was probably more decisive than their direct physical implications. Productivity was harder and longer hit than the mere calory loss would warrant.⁵

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), AG 1947/178/1-2, Telegram from Clay to Draper, 10.8.1947; WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BIECO 17/8203/12, BIECO/M(47)13: 15th Meeting of the Bipartite Economic Panel (BIECO), 19.5.1947.

² Farquharson, *The Western Allies*, p.188ff.

³ The NGCC even produced a graph showing the correlation between the progress of production and the amount of food given to Ruhr civilians. See Collins Papers, loose graph, copy in author's possession.

⁴ Even when the full civilian ration was being met, 2 out of 5 miners were in the habit of taking food home from the pits. Public Opinion Research Office, Political Division (ed.), *The Ruhr miner and his family 1947*, Bielefeld 1948, p.1.

⁵ This was certainly the NGCC's view. See PRO FO 1005, 380, COPROD P(47)22, NGCC Progress Report, 3.5.1947.

Scepticism and resignation

Part of the background to this disappointing performance was that in the 1945-46 period, the British had aroused considerable hostility amongst the miners. This affected both the way the incentive scheme worked and the miners' reaction to it.

The causes of discontent in the early period have already been noted. The slow pace at which unions were allowed to rebuild, failure to democratise control of the mines and the ration cuts in March all worsened relations between the British and the miners. Another irritant to the miners was the high level of coal exports at reparations prices. The general mood of hostility or at least scepticism undoubtedly had an important effect on productivity.

The delicacy of relations between NGCC and miners was graphically illustrated in September 1946. Henry Collins approached the IVB leader, August Schmidt, with the proposal that the miners would receive extra rations and the population some coal for domestic use (which until then had not been the case) if the miners would agree to working one Sunday a month. Such extra shifts had been common during the war and the proposal was quite a clever one since it recognised both the material and psychological causes of miners' discontent. Schmidt provisionally agreed, although the exact details of the incentives remained to be worked out. However, when the extra shifts were announced on 24 September, the miners greeted the news with considerable dissatisfaction. The fact that the extra rations were not yet on the table and, in addition, the continuing high level of exports at 'reparations' prices served to dispose the miners against the shifts.¹

This discontent was articulated and mobilised by the Communist element in the

¹ Borsdorf, 'Speck oder Sozialisierung', p.355f

Union and works councils, led by the IVB deputy president Willy Agatz. The Communists were keen to take a high profile on the issue after disappointing municipal election results in the Ruhr. They demanded better rations for miners without conditions, arguing that the beneficial effects would render Sunday-working unnecessary. In effect this was a call for the miners to be given a more privileged status at the cost of the rest of the population. As Willy Agatz put it: "Die 238.000 Bergarbeiter unseres Gebietes machen ein Prozent der gesamten Bevölkerung der britischen Zone aus. Von diesem einen Prozent hängt Leben und Gedeih der übrigen 99% der Bevölkerung der britischen Zone ab. Sollte es nicht möglich sein, die 99% der Bevölkerung zu einer genügend starken Hilfeleistung für die Bergarbeiter heranzuziehen?".¹ They also reiterated their call for socialisation of the industry, a demand which enjoyed considerable support amongst the men.² As a result, Schmidt was outvoted and a delegate conference rejected the Sunday shifts.

¹ Ibid. and Clarke, 'Die Gewerkschaftspolitik der KPD', p.24

² Christoph Kleßmann and Peter Friedemann, *Streiks und Hungermärsche im Ruhrgebiet 1946 - 1948*, Frankfurt 1977, p.42; this support may have been more an expression of general resentment than a specific endorsement of the concept of socialisation. See Borsdorf, op.cit.

The miners' reaction in the early months of 1947 now becomes more intelligible. Even before the spring food crisis, the good will and commitment that the Points System might have earned under more favourable circumstances was jeopardised by problems in supplying the goods for purchase. Some goods failed to materialise altogether; others did not meet the miners' quality expectations.¹ These supply problems reinforced the miner's scepticism towards the British recovery programme. Then came the food shortages and it is easy to imagine the general mood in spring 1947. Hunger protests fused with political demands, an amalgam skilfully mobilised by the KPD. The socialisation movement reached its apogee.²

Hostility towards the authorities was probably strengthened by the miners' acute awareness that they were regarded with envy by the rest of the population.³

One miner later recalled his experiences of being in hospital in 1947:⁴

Wir lagen mit sechzehn Mann auf der Bude, und nur wir zwei, drei Bergleute dort bekamen mittags ein Stück Fleisch oder einen Hühnerbollen. Die anderen mußten sich mit Kartoffeln und etwas Gemüse begnügen. Fleisch gab es für sie nicht. Da wurde ein Unterschied gemacht. Klar, daß auf der Bude ein ziemlicher Haß war. Wir Kumpels sind manchmal verdammt schräg angeguckt worden.

The combination of being the butt of so much anger and at the same time not getting what they felt had been promised was difficult for the miners to bear. This undoubtedly contributed to the psychological impact of the food crisis.⁵

The absence of authority

This description of the miners' mood is a necessary but not a sufficient

¹ Borsdorf, 'Speck oder Sozialisierung', p.354ff.

² Clarke, 'Die Gewerkschaftspolitik der KPD', p.35ff.

³ One survey of miner's attitudes conducted later in 1947 concluded that the 'feelings of the miner regarding incentives are mixed. He welcomes the extras which they bring but is worried by the belief that these are at the expense of the rest of the community.' *The Ruhr miner and his family 1947*, p.3.

⁴ *Hochlarmarker Lesebuch*, p.204.

⁵ See OBADA I8010/2189/47, Lagebericht for July 1947.

explanation for the productivity problems in 1947. Certainly the miners were disappointed with the goods they received. Nevertheless, Points System goods, particularly the cigarettes and spirits with their enormous black market value, were still well worth working for. What remains to be established is why it was that they did not stimulate higher output.

Part of the explanation lies in inherent features of the Points System itself and to understand these, it is necessary to return to 1946, to the point at which the scheme was being designed. After the debacle over the Sunday shifts it was evident to the British authorities that there was still a credibility gap between themselves and the miners. The miners had shown they were not prepared to commit themselves for uncertain future rewards. Any future scheme would have to be to ensure that enough extra supplies were 'up front' to win support. In addition the whole incentives question had now become very politicised. Any future scheme would have to be introduced cautiously and full union support would need to be secured in advance. Conscious of their own limited authority and of the continued weakness of German management, the British authorities were now more nervous than ever of pushing the miners too hard and risking a negative reaction which might actually bring production down further.¹

Thus when they came to discuss the Points System, the NGCC was very concerned to enlist the full support of all sections of the union. The German economic administration, too, regarded union endorsement and, in particular, support from the union left wing as the absolute pre-condition for success.² As

¹ British anxiety on this score persisted until 1948. See the remark of Harrison, F&P.Div. CCG(BE) concerning the creation of the DKBL, in WWA S22 (OMGUS), CO HIST. Br. 3/404-1/8, Memo, 'Re: German Coal Production. Summary Notes of Conference 13.10.1947'. Caution was essential, Harrison warned, otherwise the Allies might 'find themselves back on the 1923 coal level'.

² When, a few months later, Deissmann suggested that the miners might be invited to work supplementary shifts in order to generate enough coal for a miners' housing programme, he wrote that it was essential to involve the left wing of the IVB, 'ohne dessen Zustimmung ein solches Unternehmen keine Aussicht auf Erfolg hat'. HSTAD NW73, 458, VFW, Arbeitsgruppe Kohle, to Reconstruction Minister Paul, 26.4.1947.

a result, the IVB was able to extract a number of important concessions from the British, which had a general effect of weakening the link between incentives and output and putting goods on the table *before* any great increases in production had been achieved.¹ The Americans were very critical of the scheme for this reason.² General Clay himself declared with some exaggeration that the 'incentive goes to the miner just because he is there. If he shouldn't get the incentives until he got up to 1.4t or 1.5t he would have been there a long time ago'.³

The provisions which most exemplified this tendency were, first, the inclusion in the scheme of virtually all wage-earners in the mines, including workers above ground and white collar employees, and, secondly, the decision to give those workers earning fixed hourly wages a set number of points according to their position on the wage scale. In other words, workers on hourly rates would always receive the same number of points no matter how hard they worked or how well their pit produced; there was no output-related component in the number of points they received. Together, these two provisions meant that a significant proportion of the Points Goods was being dispensed simply as a reward for good attendance. Other provisions exhibited a similar generosity. Illness and accidents, for example, were accorded fairly generous treatment. In the case of light accidents, it is true, workers received no points for the shifts in which they were unable to work. But they continued to receive the coupon for Schnapps and *Lebens- und Genußmittel* and, if they missed only a few shifts, they would still have enough points to redeem the coupons. For more serious accidents there was in any case a more generous ruling. In the case of illness,

¹ Föllmer-Edling, 'Die Politik des IVB', p.41ff.

² WWA S22(OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/103-2/16, Minutes of meeting of Working Party on the Miners' Point Scheme, 21.8.1947.

³ WWA S22(OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-1/38, Verbatim Draft of Meeting of General Clay with BICO staff, 14.5.1948.

works council and management were to decide what the treatment should be on the merits of each case.¹ Since the works council continued to exercise a great deal of authority in the mines while management remained hesitant about reasserting itself, the outcome was likely to be on the generous side.

As far as contract workers were concerned,² the Points System was more output related. The number of points earned increased with the wage and the wage in turn was related to output, so that there was an incentive to put in more effort. It is true that the Union did manage to ensure that there was an upper limit to the amount of points that could be earned, thus limiting the pressure on the workers and the possibly divisive effects of the scheme. Furthermore, a guaranteed minimum of points plus the coupons for cigarettes and Schnapps were obtainable as long as the miner worked his shifts, no matter what the output.³ Yet the contract workers' earnings tended to remain well above the guaranteed minimum wage - and thus their points earnings well above the minimum points allocation - indicating that they were not relying on the guaranteed wage and point allocation.⁴ Conversely, average earnings were well below the point at which maximum points would have been earned. The miners could have produced a lot more than they did before reaching the point that the scheme deterred them from working any harder.⁵ The upward progress of productivity

¹ DGBA, File 'Gewerkschaftliches Zonensekretariat, Britische Zone, 1947, 1', Vfw to Economics Ministry, NRW and others, 25.3.1947, Appendix 8: HQ NGCC Coal Mining Supplies Dept, 'Das Punktsystem'.

² Contract wages (*Gedingelohn*) are the mining equivalent of piece rates. See below, p.133ff, for details.

³ There was no clause in the Points System specifically to this effect, but it was the logical consequence of the minimum wage clause in the wage regulations.

⁴ *ZdKW*, 23, p.63. The table shows that average Hauer earnings in 1947 were well above the guaranteed minimum. Unfortunately, a similar comparison for all contract workers (and not just the experienced Hauer) can not be made because the other contract workers were entitled to different wage rates according to their length of working in the mines.

⁵ Miners received ten points for every mark earned. Their average shift wage in the previous month was taken as the guide. Since the experienced men's average shift wages hovered around the 11 Mark level, average points earnings were around 110. The maximum earnings were 150 points. See *ZdKW*, 23, p.63 and PORO (ed.), *The Ruhr miner and his family 1947*, p.9.

in February and March 1947 testified to the miners' willingness to increase shift earnings, as the Oberbergamt observed in March.¹ The points scheme therefore *was* capable of stimulating higher productivity if conditions were favourable.

The guaranteed minimum points allocation and the supply of cigarettes and Schnapps that could be bought with it *did* reduce the stimulus to higher output, however, when it became apparent that nothing could be obtained with the extra points. In April, the Oberbergamt noted that not only was there a widespread fear that the entire system of food rationing was about to collapse but in addition textiles and shoes were almost impossible to obtain.² It was only then, in the atmosphere of resentment and mistrust engendered by the shortages, that the Scheme became 'mehr und mehr eine Anwesenheitsprämie'.³ The problem lay therefore in a combination of factors: the problems of supply, the less than stringent terms of the incentive scheme and the existence of a black market which made it hard to maintain any rigorous link between incentives and output.

Just as important in limiting the pressure on the men to increase productivity was the pattern of wage negotiations, for on the outcome of the negotiations hung not only the cash earned but also the number of points. But first some explanation should be given of the wage system prevailing in the mines.

Some 60 percent of underground miners were contract workers⁴ whose wage, like piece-workers in other industries, depended on their actual output rather than on a fixed hourly rate. In most German industries, piece-work rates were negotiated for the whole industry or for a whole region and remained in force

¹ OBADA I8010/1021/47, OBAD Lagebericht for March 1947.

² OBADA I8010/1343/47, OBAD Lagebericht for April 1947.

³ OBADA I8010/1902/47, OBAD Lagebericht for June 1947.

⁴ H.H.Bischoff, 'Arbeiterzahl und Förderanstieg', *Glückauf*, 1951, 87, 23/24, pp.563-567, here p.566.

until the next round of pay negotiations. They were (and are) rarely the subject of shop-floor bargaining. This is because the job specification could be standardised and defined in a national or regional contract. In mining on the other hand, each face is unique and the conditions in each face constantly in flux. Standardised regional piece-work rates¹ were impossible. All that the regional pay settlements did was to establish the wage which the miner, at normal effort, could be expected to reach (*Hauerdurchschnittslohn*). It was then up to the monthly (sometimes less frequent) contract negotiations in each face to establish how much coal the miners could be expected to mine, how many props to recover or how many cubic metres of packing were to be carried out in order to reach this standard wage. These negotiations, which took place between the pit deputy (*Steiger*) and a representative of the face workers (*Ortsältester*), therefore involved difficult judgements as to the severity of conditions. In reality they were a test of the *Steiger's* authority against the resolution of the men, a conflict in which a whole range of factors such as the demand for coal, the labour market, the degree of unionisation, the nature of the personalities involved and so on could influence the outcome.

Thus, more than in any other industry, wages in the mining industry were a test of authority and power, a continuous battle between management and men. Moreover, in the post-war period, the degree to which shifts in power could influence the outcome of the negotiations or, put another way, the openness of interpretation as to what output could be expected under the given conditions was greater than ever. This was because there was general agreement that 'normal' output, by pre-war standards (*Friedensleistung*), was not a realistic goal. Undernourishment, shortage of supplies and other factors meant that, with the best will in the world, the productivity of 1938 was unlikely to be

¹ Pay settlements did, of course, define rates for miners on shift wages.

attained. In September 1945, the NGCC formally laid down that, though the standard of 1938 was the ultimate objective, at present '80 percent of this estimated output per man/shift will be taken as the normal.'¹ At the same time, the NGCC acknowledged that there would be cases where even 80 percent of pre-war output could not realistically be anticipated and a procedure for vetting such special cases was established. In other words, the contract bargaining now had to determine not one but two intangibles - the ease of working at the face and the degree to which general living and working conditions allowed normal working. The miners were in a good position to exploit this situation because management continued to feel insecure. Despite repeated attempts to halt it, denazification dragged on. What was probably so unsettling for the officials was that each time it appeared that the process had come to an end, some new programme began. The first arrests had come soon after the capitulation when the Americans made 61 arrests and 96 removals from the industry.² Then in October 1945 a new drive began and by the end of January 1946, over 1,000 officials had been dismissed.³ As was noted in the previous chapter, representations by Collins led to the decision that there should be no further dismissals of mining officials.⁴ Yet, in July, the programme was resumed with the creation of a new denazification committee. The committee eventually considered some 336 cases, winding up its work in October 1946. At this point it really did seem as if denazification was over in the industry but in 1947 a general 'categorisation' of all suspected Nazis was carried out, thus raising the issue once more. As long as denazification was in the air, deputies could not be

¹ AZG, File 'I 1 13, Gedinge Regelung, 1.1.45-31.12.1945', Directive from ADMG Production, Nr.5 Ruhr Coal District, NGCC to Mining Companies, 29.9.1945.

² PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD/P(46)12, 'Denazification of the Coal Industry', 5.10.1946.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* and Collins, *Mining memories*, p.42ff.

expected to be firm disciplinarians. A secret report by the Hibernia management noted that 'Bei den Angestellten ist es bekannt, daß ein gutes Zeugnis des zuständigen Betriebsrates vor den Entnazifizierungsausschüssen besonders hoch gewertet wird.'¹ An American investigation at the beginning of 1948 found that managers were still haunted by the threat or the perceived threat of denazification.²

The uncertain ownership situation and the threat of socialisation was another factor that continued to trouble management. Even after a five year moratorium on socialisation was introduced at American insistence in the summer of 1947, the managers' position remained uncertain. Most regarded themselves as trustees for their former owners, yet in matters such as dismissing or disciplining lax deputies and foremen they lacked 'the protection of boards of directors' and had 'all the pressure in the world from below' not to take a tough line, as a senior figure in the industry remarked.³ The same source commented that 'to secure the measure of discipline which is actually prevailing, managers are depending on trade unions and would never take a serious stand against them.'⁴ There was certainly a fair measure of exaggeration in this, particularly as the comment came in summer 1948 when the balance of power was already shifting considerably in favour of the employers. But by and large the period up to at least the spring of that year was characterised by very uncertain management in the mines.

Part of the problem here was that, as before, Military Government was reluctant to give management full backing. Apart from their continued sensitivity

¹ BBA 32, 882, Hibernia, Memo, 'Ernährungsverhältnisse', with additional heading in pencil: 'Geheim. Bericht an Mr. Hughes 2RCD. 23.5.1947'.

² Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948, op.cit.

³ Interview with Bergassessor Wimmelmann in Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

towards labour, British officials recognised that management, for reasons that have been touched on in the last chapter and will be explored in more detail below, could not be relied upon to commit itself fully to the coal drive. This probably explains why it was that managers were still forbidden from dismissing men until labour exchange approval had been obtained. The danger was that management would otherwise concentrate on improving productivity to the detriment of maximising output. British policy was therefore understandable but its consequence was to limit further management's capacity to control labour.

The continuing fragility of authority had direct and important implications for the wage negotiations. 'Bei der Vereinbarung der Gedinge haben die Aufsichtspersonen ..meist keinen leichten Stand', noted the Oberbergamt.¹ The introduction of the Points System served only to intensify the miners' interest in a favourable contract, since, as already noted, the number of points received was determined by the cash earnings and thus both money and points were dependent on the negotiations' outcome. The Steiger found themselves continually confronted with the demand for more lenient contract rates, often accompanied by the argument that the food shortages and the ill-health of the men prevented any greater output.² In general the Steiger - and behind them senior management - put up only limited resistance to these demands.³

In sum, it was not food shortages alone but instead a crisis of legitimacy and authority, exposed and exacerbated by food and other supply shortages, that was the real cause of low productivity.

¹ OBADA I8010/433/47, Lagebericht for January 1947.

² OBADA I8010/1021/47, Lagebericht for March 1947.

³ See the comments of the VfW, cited in Abelshäuser, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, p.41.

Tinkering with the system

In the summer of 1947 the British and particularly the Americans made considerable efforts to increase the pressures and incentives to extra production. Within the organs of the Bipartite Control Office (BICO) the Americans worked with their British counterparts to revise the incentives schemes.¹ The Points System was tightened up in a number of ways and the conditions for accidents and sickness made less generous.² A supplementary three phase programme of incentives was introduced. In Phase 1, mines were given a four week production target which, if met over the period specified, entitled the miners to so-called '10-in-1' or 'C.A.R.E' Packets of luxury goods, foodstuffs with a total of 40,000 calories, textiles, childrens' toys and other articles.³ There were three such Care Packet actions. The new philosophy manifested itself not only in the direct linking of the incentives to a specific production target but also in the fact that, in the first action, only underground workers were to receive the Packet.⁴ 'Phase III' which began in January, was also linked to output and provided the miners with a variety of imported food and consumer goods. The miner received a certain number of coupons or Import-Kaufmarken on the basis of individual performance and that of the mine.⁵ The intervening Phase II, on the other hand, had no such productivity link and was designed simply to protect the miner from fluctuations in the food supply in the period between the

¹ Föllmer-Edling, 'Die Politik des IVB', p.68ff.

² OBADA I8010/2523/47, OBAD Lagebericht for August and September 1947; the effect of the harsher treatment for sickness was somewhat neutralised by a directive from the Land Office for nutrition in November 1947 which reinstated the practice of giving sick miners full supplementary rations for the first two weeks of the illness. See OBADA I8874/63/48, BA Bottrop to OBAD, 5.1.1948, annex: Rheinisches Stahlwerk Abt. Arenberg to Ruhrknappschaft, Bochum 30.12.1947.

³ WWA S22(OMGUS), CO HIST BR 3/404-1/8, Bipartite Board Memo, BISEC M(47) 25, 'Incentive Scheme for Coal Miners', 27.8.1947.

⁴ Föllmer-Edling, 'Die Politik des IVB', p.74.

⁵ WWA S22(OMGUS), CO HIST BR 3/404-1/8, Bipartite Board Memo, BISEC M(47) 25, 'Incentive Scheme for Coal Miners', 27.8.1947.

first and second care packets.¹

These additions made some contribution to productivity but the weakness of the Care Packet actions was that they produced a great deal of effort in the target month itself and a relapse as soon as the Packet ceased to be in operation.² In addition, it proved not to be possible to protect the miners or their families from the renewed food shortages at the end of the year.³ Moreover, none of these measures filled the 'authority vacuum'. The revised Points System regulations contained the clause that contracts should be periodically reviewed to ensure, 'daß sie einer normalen Leistung entsprechen'.⁴ Yet this instruction, introduced in September 1947, could have little impact until the mining officials believed their situation to be more secure.

Voting with their feet

What has become evident is that it was not just *new* labour that was responsible for the disappointing results. At the same time as the established workforce was being regenerated with new labour, it was also *degenerating*. It was degenerating in a physical sense, as long years of poor diet took their toll, and in a psychological sense, as morale deteriorated and the normal structure of authority fell apart. This raises the question of whether there was a specific new labour problem at all. Of course, newcomers were less experienced and therefore less productive than established men. The interesting question is whether, once such unavoidable effects of inexperience have been discounted, it proved any harder or easier to harness the newcomers' productive potential than

¹ Ibid.: OBADA I8010/2523/47, OBAD Lagebericht for August and September 1947.

² See, for instance, WWA S22 (OMGUS) BICO BISEC 11/104-2/3, UK/USCCG paper, 'Review of hard coal production in the Ruhr', 10.6.1948.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS) CO HIST BR 3/404-1/8, COCOM M(48)1, Minutes of 2nd meeting of COCOM, 20.1.1948 and see also table 2 above.

⁴ Abelshauser, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, p.41.

that of their experienced colleagues.

Though the situation was much better in 1947 than in the previous year, it continued to be very difficult to hold on to new labour. Many newcomers departed after working only a few shifts. The mine Prosper I/II, for instance, reported at the beginning of July 1947 that, of 75 men recruited in mid-June, some 27 had already left.¹ Over 30 percent of all new miners hired in the first half of 1947 by the GBAG's Gruppe Hamborn disappeared within a few weeks of being laid on. Conditions were considerably better in the second half of the year and the proportion of early departures had fallen to 6 percent. Nevertheless, by the end of December 1947 about one third of new miners hired by the Group since July had already left.² In 1947 as a whole, the Ruhr mines hired 87,235 men and lost 42,346 of which 3/4 were voluntary losses.³

Within the group of new miners, it was those who came from outside the Ruhr who were most likely to quit. Workers from the Ruhr made up little over 50 percent of all new miners laid on between September 1945 and August 1947 but almost two thirds of those still there at the end of that period.⁴ According to the Gruppe Hamborn's figures, outsiders were 1 1/2 - 2 times as likely to leave as other new miners.⁵

Some of this wastage would have taken place under any circumstances. Working conditions in the mines have always been of a nature to deter outsiders.

¹ WWA F35, 493, 'Erfahrungsbericht der Zeche Prosper I/II, Betriebsabteilung 1', July 1947.

² WWA F35, 494, copy of report from Abteilung U (GBAG Gruppe Hamborn) to Vorstand, 'betrifft.: Erfahrungsbericht über Neubergleute', 14.7.1948.

³ Unpublished figures of the Ges. Verb. StdKW, tables 'Belegschaftswechsel-Arbeiter unter Tage. Ruhr' & 'Aufteilung des Abganges nach Gründen - Arbeiter unter Tage. Ruhr'.

⁴ WWA F35, 494, GMSO, Circular Nr. 340, 16.6.1947, annex: 'Ruhrbezirk. A: Zeitraum September 1945 bis August 1947 einschließlich'.

⁵ Abteilung U (Gruppe Hamborn) report, 14.7.1948, op.cit. Outsiders were defined as all miners coming to the mines via the Reception camp in Bochum-Hiltrop.

particularly men with very different standards and working experiences behind them. On top of this perennial mining problem, the high number of leavers was yet more evidence of the way supply shortages prevented the miners, despite the priority they were given, from obtaining more than a very basic standard of living. A detailed American survey of conditions in the Ruhr observed that 'since top priorities are given to the miners for repairing or building houses, it is widely assumed that they all live quite comfortably. Prospective miners who came from other parts of Germany to join this "privileged class" soon realise that, although miners are given preferential treatment, the situation in the Ruhr is very tight as far as food, clothing and housing is concerned'.¹

Hostels remained in many cases very miserable places. Even in 1947, some were still surrounded by barbed wire and concrete pillarboxes, 'a grim reminder' of their former function.² In one of the worst camps visited by a British survey team,³ the sixty occupants had to share three stoves. A 'frying pan could be precariously balanced on one, leaving little or no room for additional pots and pans. The confusion and frustration of 60 independent cooks attempting to operate at the same time might well be imagined', noted the survey laconically. In addition the room stank because of faulty plumbing.⁴ In none of the camps and hostels visited by the survey team were there any sheets on the beds.⁵ Social facilities were extremely limited. The common rooms contained neither games, nor newspapers, nor books and sometimes no radio.⁶ Even where they tried, the collieries could not obtain simple pieces of equipment such as footballs and

¹ Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal production', op.cit.

² PORO (ed.), *The mining trainee 1947*, p.18 and on conditions in camps generally see also OBADA I8010/183/48, OBAD Lagebericht for December 1947.

³ See the introduction, p.24, fn.1.

⁴ PORO (ed.), *The mining trainee 1947*, p.18.

⁵ Ibid., p.20.

⁶ Ibid and OBAD Lagebericht for December 1947, op.cit.

table-tennis bats.¹ Boredom and social isolation often engendered drunkenness and rowdiness in the hostels, which in turn deterred many.

Furthermore, the narrow scope for improvement which the general shortages allowed was often not properly exploited. That vicious circle of management neglect and recruits' behaviour that has already been observed in the early period continued to paralyse attempts to create a more pleasant environment. In many camps, for instance, there was a great deal of theft and this discouraged the mines from investing money in improving facilities.² It also deterred many new miners from remaining. Another area where management was discouraged from taking initiatives was that of cash or credit advances. Many new miners faced the problem that they arrived at the mines with very little money, then had to wait a week or ten days for their first wage packet and then found that repayments on their work clothes in conjunction with other charges were such that they had too little money left. This is one important reason why wastage in the first few weeks was so high. Yet both management and the NGCC were cautious about giving advances because of frequent experiences of men absconding with the money.³ Similarly, men who had been ill might find themselves returning to work with a crippling burden of hostel charges to pay and, in many cases, the mines do not seem to have responded in a very sympathetic manner. Again, the mines were discouraged from taking a more generous line by the feeling that a number of new miners were exploiting the system and using sickness notes as a means of taking time off. Even where management could easily have made small improvements, their attitude towards the new recruits was often so negative or passive that nothing was done.

¹ BBA 35, 36. Emscher Lippe mine to RCD4, 26.6.1946.

² See for instance BBA 30, 267, Memorandum from the GHH Mines, dept. 'Einsatz ortsfremder Arbeitskräfte', Oberhausen 9.9.1946.

³ See for example BBA 10, 88, letter from Walker, 3 RCD, to Mine Friedrich der Grosse, 'betr.: Flüchtige Bergleute', 22.1.1947; HStAD NW42, 912, C.H.Hudson, 'Besuch der Gutehoffnungshütte, 12-19.12.1948'.

Again and again British observers were to note instances where a small amount of concern and imagination could have transformed the situation.¹

New labour and the authority vacuum

How productive were those new miners who stayed in the mines? Employers and Mines Inspectorate knew an answer to this. According to them, the disproportion between *Stammbelegschaft* and new miner output was bigger even than the understandable difference in skill level would lead one to expect. In June 1947, for example, the OBAD reported that the behaviour of the established workforce remained generally disciplined and orderly but that the newcomers had in many cases lost 'jede Empfindung für Einordnung, Recht und Moral'.² In the beginning of 1948, the DKBL circulated the mines with the results of a survey which suggested that if it had not been for considerable efforts on the part of the skilled men, output would have fallen far more sharply than was the case.³

Some of this was more the result of prejudice than real observation. Whatever differences there were between the newcomers and established men, we know they can not have been as dramatic as the DKBL report suggested. After all, it has already been seen that face output, where the newcomers were concentrated, recovered better than productivity elsewhere in the mine.

Nevertheless, it does seem to have been particularly difficult to get a considerable proportion of the new miners to commit their energies to production. Newcomers seem to have been more likely than their skilled counterparts to exploit the generous clauses in the incentive schemes. Many

¹ Eg. PORO (ed.), *The mining trainee 1947*, p.19ff; WWA S22 (OMGUS) BICO BISEC 11/104-2/2, Coalco report to BICO, October 1948; HStAD NW42, 912, C.H.Hudson, 'Besuch der

² OBADA I8010/1902/47, OBAD Lagebericht, June 1947.

³ WWA F35, 3511, DKBL, Circular No. I 11, 7.2.1948, appendix: Gerhard Rauer, 'Die Entwicklung der Leistung unter Tage und der individuellen Leistung des Bergmannes im Ruhrbergbau in den Jahren 1946 - 1947'.

new miners relied on black-marketeering of coupon and Care Packet goods to make up their income and made no effort to maximise their earnings or points.¹ So much so, that some mines went over to paying new miners less than the minimum wage in cases where it was felt that the men had deliberately worked less than they could.

New miners were more likely to take time off for accidents and sickness which did not really warrant it. By registering as sick or injured, they were able to absent themselves from work while at the same time not jeopardising the coupons or the minimum number of points necessary to redeem them. At the mine Prosper III, for example, 12 percent of the overall workforce but almost 30 percent of the newcomers in the hostels were off work at any one time for reasons of sickness or accident. In another mine, Prosper I/II, the absentee rate of the hostel occupants was even higher. This discrepancy went beyond the newcomers' objectively greater susceptibility to accidents and illness² and, in any case, the timing of absences was even more revealing than their number. Throughout the July to December period, the amount of accidents and sickness amongst the established men in the Prosper pits remained reasonably constant. On the other hand the new miner's absences fluctuated wildly. During the Care Packet actions, when absenteeism for reasons of illness meant loss of entitlement, the newcomers were actually less liable to sickness than the established men. Immediately following the completion of each Care Packet, the newcomers' sickness statistics leapt up far beyond that of their experienced colleagues. For example, at the end of the last week of the second Care Packet action, 3¹/₂ percent of the established men in mine Prosper I/II and only 1¹/₂ percent of the new miners in hostels were off sick. Three weeks later, 23

¹ OBADA I 8010/1597/47, Lagebericht for May 1947.

² OBADA I 8874/63/48, BA Bottrop to OBAD, 5.1.1948, annex: Rheinisches Stahlwerk Abt. Arenberg to Ruhrknappschaft, Bochum 30.12.1947.

percent of the newcomers and between 8 and 10 percent of the Stammbelegschaft were on the sick list. Absenteeism due to accidents also fluctuated wildly, but since absence though accident did *not* mean loss of the Care Packet (so long as the worker had been present at the beginning of the action) the new miners' accident statistics rose steeply almost from the beginning of each action.¹ Other mines had similar experiences to report.²

Hand in hand with this behaviour went a refusal to accept either the rules of their superiors or the working pace of their established colleagues. There were frequent reports of the young trainees' resistance to instruction from the deputies, of newcomers leaving work before the end of the shift and so on.³ The Bergämter complained that it was extraordinarily difficult to persuade the young newcomers of the importance of the safety regulations, 'da vielen von ihnen in den langen Jahren des Krieges das Gefühl für geordnete Verhältnisse abhanden gekommen sei'.⁴ In March, the OBAD reported that older miners were frequently unwilling to work with the newcomers because of the 'Überheblichkeit der Neulinge, die häufig jede Belehrung durch Ältere von vornherein entschieden ablehnen, selbst wenn sie offensichtlich in ihrem eigenen Interesse liegt'.⁵

There were a number of reasons for the newcomers' behaviour. In contrast to the established workforce, many were young and single.⁶ They were therefore

¹ Ibid., especially the two attached diagrams, 'Gegenüberstellung der Fehlschichten in % zur Belegschaft'.

² Eg. BBA 32, 741, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, 4.6.1948. See, however, OBADA I3874/281/48, BA Lothringen, Gutachten über die Kranken- und Unfallzahlen, 21.5.1948, which saw the sickness rate after the Care Packet actions as genuinely reflecting over-exertion during the actions themselves.

³ OBADA I 8010/1343/47, OBAD Lagebericht for April 1947, also June 1947; BBA 30, 268, Minutes of meeting with mine officials on 18 August, 20.8.1947.

⁴ OBADA I 8010/433/47, OBAD Lagebericht for January 1947.

⁵ OBADA I 8010/1021/47, OBAD Lagebericht for March 1947.

⁶ Over 4/5 of the established workforce were married as against around 1/3 of the new miners. See Abteilung U (Gruppe Hamborn) report, 14.7.1948, op.cit.

less drawn by the consumer goods, particularly textiles and furniture, which might otherwise have given them an incentive to maximise their points earnings. A Military Government survey noted that experienced men were more likely than newcomers to complain of having too few points.¹ Being without dependents, single newcomers were also more willing to engage in the risks of detection that serious black-marketeering involved. For all hostel occupants, the temptation to engage in black market activities must have been considerable since a veritable army of *Schieber* (spivs) and traders waited at the entrance to the camps.² Even where newcomers did not augment their earnings in this manner, their aim in coming to the mines was often simply to weather out the difficult post-war years; they were not particularly interested in earning everything they could and asked for little more than a roof over their heads and for decent measures of food, drink and cigarettes.³ The lack of sympathy, training or welfare provision offered by mine managements merely intensified their unwillingness to do more than the bare minimum of work required.

Though it was predominantly *new* miners who exploited the system in this way, they were able to do so only because of management's loss of authority over the workforce *as a whole*. For example, the ease with which the men obtained doctor's notes indicates the reluctance of the Knappschaft doctors to ask too many questions.⁴ It was a sign of the union's influence in the industry and a dramatic reversal of the situation in the Nazi era, when the doctors had put ever more pressure on the men to continue working.⁵ Within the mines, the deputies

¹ PORO (ed.), *The mining trainee 1947*, p.15.

² OBADA I 8010/1343/47, Lagebericht for April 1947.

³ OBADA I 8010/1597/47, Lagebericht for May 1947.

⁴ Rheinisches Stahlwerk Abt. Arenberg to Ruhrknappschaft, Bochum 30.12.1947, op.cit.

⁵ 'Da mußte man schon halbtot sein, bevor der Arzt wegen Krankheit Arbeitsverschonung verschrieb', as Hans Dieter Baroth recalled in his autobiographical novel *Aber es waren schöne Zeiten*, Munich 1982, p.13.

were unable to control recalcitrant new labourers because of their general apprehensiveness about intervening too forcefully. Managements were often reluctant to impose fines and were unable to dismiss at will.¹

Why did the established miners not impose their *own* discipline on those newcomers whose behaviour endangered their safety, threatened group earnings or simply gave offence? In the first place, the threat to group earnings should not be overstated given the ability to force favourable wage agreements out of management and the fact that the established workforce, too, was often not trying to maximise its earnings. It was only after the currency reform that new miners really became a threat to their colleagues' earnings. Nevertheless, workers' representatives sometimes *did* try to exert sanctions. Works councillors spoke out on more than one occasion for penalties against new miners found to be wilfully underproducing.² However, they found that the sanctions that they could bring to bear were limited. Even more important was the fact that the IVB was very concerned not to alienate the new miners and risk creating a permanent division in the workforce.³ It also did not want to make concessions to management that might set a precedent. IVB leaders, for instance opposed the idea of withholding coupons from 'slackers'.⁴ Even in respect of smoking underground, an offence committed almost exclusively by newcomers, the unions and works councillors were reluctant to endorse a hard line. It was not until the beginning of 1948 that the OBAD instituted body searches for smoking materials at the pit head and, even then, both union and a

¹ OBADA I8010/723/47, Obad Lagebericht for February 1947, op.cit.: BBA 35,40. Minutes of meeting of Produktionsausschuß, 24.6.1947.

² BBA 32, 882, Report on meeting of production committee deputy-chairmen, 25.6.1947; Föllmer-Edling, 'Die Politik des IVB', p.80.

³ See chapter 7, p.313ff.

⁴ BBA 32, 882, Report on meeting of production committee deputy-chairmen, 25.6.1947.

number of works councils opposed it.¹ In other words, newcomers exploiting the system found themselves the beneficiaries both of the lack of managerial authority and of the hidden class struggle that characterised the industry under British control.

3: The Bergassessoren fight back. The impact of German management, November 1947 - June 1948

The transfer of authority

Both British and Americans increasingly believed that the key to increasing output was to strengthen management's confidence and control. As early as the beginning of 1947, the British and Americans had decided that the time was opportune for transferring control over the mining industry to the Germans. This would allow British staff to be reduced, conform with the general occupation policy of returning power to the Germans and, it was hoped, encourage greater efforts from management. The VfW was requested to draw up details of an organisational structure, headed by itself, to be implemented by 1 April. However the VfW was very reluctant to resume authority over the industry under the prevailing conditions and its proposals, presented after much delay, were seen by the Allies as being completely inadequate.² There were also international constraints hindering the delegation of control to the Germans.³ The transfer of power was therefore shelved for the time being, the NGCC remaining in control. Perhaps one other reason for the slow progress in this direction was that the British in particular remained extremely

¹ OBADA I5200/3119/47, GMSO, Circular, 25.11.1947; I5200/255/48, OBAD, Circular, 31.1.1948; I5200/376/48, OBAD, Circular, 14.2.1948; I5200/255/48, various BA responses to the above.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BIECO 17/8203/19, BIECO/P(47)140, 'Control of Coal Production', 27.5.1947; BICO BIECO 17/8203/12, Minutes of 12th Meeting of BIECO, 23.4.1947 and 13th Meeting, 30.4.1947.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS) BICO BISEC 11/105-3/8, Verbatim minutes of meeting of BICO Chairmen with Bizonal representatives, 13.10.1947.

circumspect about backing management in a way that might strengthen unrest or depress morale in the workforce. Even when the British and Americans had decided to design the future German organisation themselves, one of the leading British participants warned that caution was essential, otherwise they might 'find themselves back on the 1923 coal level', a reference to French problems during the Ruhr occupation of that year.¹

In many ways, the August 1947 Washington conference, organised by the US to discuss coal matters, was a turning point. The Americans persuaded the British to put a five year moratorium on the question of socialisation in the Ruhr. This removed a lot of management anxiety, particularly since denazification was gradually coming to an end. Following the conference, the bipartite² authorities decided to design a German organisation themselves. The outcome was the Deutsche Kohlenbergbauleitung (DKBL), a body consisting largely of industrial representatives but with some trade union representation and which came into existence in November 1947. The NGCC was wound up and replaced by a smaller bipartite organisation, the UK/US Coal Control Group, whose job it was to supervise the DKBL and report directly to the Bipartite Board. The British interdepartmental coal production committee COPROD was replaced by a bipartite committee in Frankfurt, COCOM, charged with advising the Bipartite Board on coal matters and ensuring that the recommendations of the Washington conference were implemented.³ Military Government's influence continued to make itself felt in the mining industry for several years but the creation of the DKBL undoubtedly represented a considerable transfer of

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), CO HIST BR 3/404-1/8, Memorandum 'Re: German coal production. Summary notes of conference 13.10.1947', 13.10.1947.

² In line with contemporary usage, 'bipartite' always refers to the British and Americans, while the 'bizonal' administration was the German counterpart.

³ Ibid.; BICO BISEC 11/103-2/22, COCOM M(47)1, Minutes of the first meeting of the Coal Committee, 15.12.1947; BAK Z4, 58, Bipartite News Office Frankfurt, News release, 'German Coal Management Formed', 19.11.1947.

authority back to German management and reduced the scope for outside control.

Renewed confidence

Managers began to regain lost confidence. Despite General Robertson's declaration to the NRW parliament in April 1948 that the industry would never be returned to its former owners, the possibility of socialisation ever being introduced was looking increasingly remote. As the US chairman of the UK/USCCG, Bob Estill, prepared to leave for the US, he organised a special luncheon with senior DKBL figures at which, as the minutes record, 'he desired to point out that he definitely did not agree to any plan of nationalisation or socialisation of the coal industry and specifically referred to the bad results that England had experienced in the nationalisation of their coal recently'.¹ True, there were still examples of management's nervousness; the Control Group criticised the fact that works councils were still sometimes being consulted on the appointment of senior management personnel.² Yet there were many other signs that management was beginning to assert itself in relation to both labour and labour exchanges. There was a greater willingness to carry out dismissals.³ In February 1948 the IVB's Bochum district complained about colliery managers' 'increasing aggressiveness'⁴ and in March the Union noted a disturbing increase in the number of pits refusing to keep to the minimum wage agreement.⁵

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC, 11/104-1/38, Report on 'Luncheon Meeting of Hard Coal District Production Directors As Guests of A.F. Marshall, Member (US)', 2.8.1948; Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948, op.cit.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-2/3, UKUSCCG report, 'Review of hard coal production in the Ruhr', 10.6.1948.

³ BBA 10, 594, Minutes of meeting of colliery directors in the DKBL's Bochum district, 25.5.1948.

⁴ DGBA File 'Industrieverband Bergbau 1946-1948. Tätigkeitsberichte', Report for February 1948.

⁵ Ibid., Report for March 1948.

These conditions and a more favourable food situation in which most normal consumers in the mining areas kept above hunger rations throughout the spring combined to push productivity up from 2.473t in January to 2.627t in March.¹ That it did not go higher was evidence of the many continuing constraints such as the inherent limitations of the incentive schemes and the unremitting and increasingly severe shortage of mine supplies.²

Production without reward: management and underpriced coal

In addition, there was one constraint on mining output whose impact was actually strengthened by the DKBL's formation, namely that existing coal prices and supply conditions offered management no incentive to maximise production.

Members of the Coal Control Group soon became aware that neither management nor its spokesmen in the DKBL were inclined to maximise coal production at any cost. The Group reported that it 'was evident that the DKBL had no real policy with regard to immediate production.....The Directors are taking a long-term view and would appear indifferent to the necessity of immediately maximising coal production'.³ In confidential discussions with the Americans, a senior management representative admitted that the employers were not doing their very best to secure maximum output. He also revealed the reason for this. How could they be expected to maximise production, he asked, 'when we are only allowed to include 1.50 RM for the depreciation of our equipment per ton of coal mined for subsidy purposes, while our capital goods depreciate at the rate of from 2.00 RM to 2.20 RM or more per

¹ *ZdKW*, 7, p.45.

² WWA S22(OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-1/38, Verbatim Draft - Meeting of General Clay with BICO Staff, 14.5.1948.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-2/3, UK/USCCG report, 'Review of hard coal production in the Ruhr', 10.6.1948.

ton of coal extracted'.¹ The Americans concluded that in 'view of the fact that coal mining is an industry which is operating at present at a [loss]² (which varies more or less directly with output) it would seem that under existing price and subsidy policies the board of managers should keep production at the lowest possible level consistent with its members continuing in office'.³ Not only were the subsidies currently provided insufficient to meet depreciation, in some cases insufficient to meet even operating costs, but in addition there was anxiety that the subsidies might soon cease, indeed that the industry might have to pay the subsidies back in the future.⁴ In the other words, controlled coal prices meant that the financial interest of the collieries was out of step with the economic needs of the nation. There was no material incentive to respond to the urgent need for coal.

There was an inherent contradiction between the Allied policy of giving management greater freedom and authority on the one hand but on the other not restoring the economic incentives that made production worthwhile. It would be inappropriate in this study to dwell on all the circumstances governing the Allies policy towards the domestic (ie. non-export) coal price. Until summer 1947, Britain's attempts to increase coal prices had been overridden by the other Occupying powers in Berlin because of their interests as coal consumers.⁵ In summer 1947, the Americans acknowledged the need to increase coal prices and a modest increase was implemented⁶ but there was much resistance to further rises from within the German economic administration where it was felt that the inflationary consequences would destabilise the rickety price structure in

¹ Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948, op.cit.

² Word is missing in original, MR.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Collins, *Mining memories*, p.47.

⁶ Ibid.

the two Zones.¹ This fear of cost-push inflation was to be of fundamental importance in determining future German policy towards the industry.

A qualitative recruitment strategy

The divergence between Allied and management's interests was to make itself swiftly apparent in the approach to new labour. In January 1948, the new director-general of the DKBL, Heinrich Kost, proposed to the UK/USCCG that recruitment in future be restricted to covering wastage and that increases in production be obtained only by improving productivity.² The Control Group were unimpressed by Kost's proposals which in its view contained overly optimistic estimates of future developments in both individual output and absenteeism.³ Recruitment was therefore to go on as before except that the group agreed, in the interest of other industries, to limit recruitment from the Ruhr area to 500 men a week.

Nevertheless, as the table shows, recruitment in the first half of 1948 was 20-25 percent below 1947 levels.⁴ The effect of the drop was particularly marked because wastage did not decline, despite the smaller number of newcomers entering the industry. Taking the underground workforce on its own, the period July to December 1947 had seen an increase of over 27,000 men; between January and June 1948, on the other hand, the workforce grew by less than 5,000.⁵ As far as the underground workforce is concerned, recruitment did

¹ For a succinct statement of this view from a somewhat later date, see BAK Z13, 198, VfW to Direktorialkanzlei, 14.3.1949.

² PRO FO 1005, 1624, Minutes of 5th Meeting of UK/USCCG, 16.1.1948.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The absolute figures are larger than figures used elsewhere in this study because these include workers above ground and in ancillary plants. Monthly figures for the underground workforce alone are not available. There is however evidence that the drop from 1947 to 1948 was even more marked for the underground workforce on its own. The sudden burst of recruitment in April is explained by the fact that that was when school-leavers were taken on.

⁵ *ZdKW*, 7, p.32.

indeed do little more than cover wastage.

Table 4: Recruitment, wastage and workforce growth 1947-48¹

<u>Month</u>	<u>men hired</u>	<u>wastage</u>	<u>workforce growth</u>
<u>1947</u>			
July	12,400	5,700	6,700
August	13,300	6,400	6,900
September	10,000	5,500	4,500
October	12,000	5,800	6,200
November	11,000	4,800	6,200
December ²	6,500	3,900	2,600
<u>1948</u>			
January	8,274	6,908	1,366
February	8,820	6,551	1,569
March	8,129	5,203	2,926
April	12,931	6,385	6,546
May	7,200	6,100	1,100
June	8,200	7,600	600

In its reports to the Control Group, the DKBL argued that this low increase was the result of mining supply shortages which were severely limiting the collieries' ability to absorb new labour.³ Whilst there was no doubting the seriousness of supply shortages, there is plenty of evidence that they were not the prime factor inhibiting recruitment. At a meeting between senior colliery representatives and the DKBL's manpower experts it was apparent that both mines and DKBL were ill-disposed to any great increases in workforce size. Indeed the mines wanted to close down the central reception camp in Hiltrop altogether; the DKBL advised caution, because it accurately predicted that wastage would rise, thus necessitating continued recruitment to preserve current workforce levels.⁴ Over the following months, suspicions hardened at the UK/USCCG that no

¹ Figures compiled from the OBAD Lageberichte in OBADA I 8010, vols 2.3&4. Figures have been rounded up and include all labour below and above ground and in ancillary works.

² Recruitment was temporarily reduced in view of the approaching holidays.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-1/39, 'Extract from the March 1948 report by German coal mine management', March 1948.

⁴ BBA 32,741, Minutes of directors' meeting, 30.1.1948.

attempt was being made to maximise the number of men underground.¹ However, the Control Group was reluctant to intervene since it wanted to give the DKBL a chance to prove its effectiveness.²

Preparation, development and the deprived face

Not only was recruitment down on the previous period but, in addition, the influx of newcomers was not being used to build up workforce at the face.

Table 5: Face productivity and face size 1938 and 1946-8

<u>Year</u>	<u>Output/man shift</u>		<u>Shifts at face as % of all shifts underground⁵</u>
	<u>face³</u>	<u>all underground⁴</u>	
1938	3.10	1.970	63.5
1946	2.19	1.208	55.2
1947	2.41	1.215	50.41
1948	2.51	1.286	51.2

The figures in table 5 show that throughout the post-war period a far smaller proportion of the underground workforce was at the face than before the war. At first sight this is the very reverse of what one would expect. Throughout 1945 and 1946, the NGCC gave out continual instructions that all possible labour was to be concentrated at the face and that developmental and preparatory work (*Aus- and Vorrichtung*) was to be cut down to a minimum.⁶ This should have led to a *higher* proportion of face workers than before the war, when the mines

¹ PRO FO 1005/1624, UK/USCCG, Minutes of 8th Meeting, 27.2.1948; Minutes of 10th Meeting, 2.4.1948.

² See the remarks of H.E. Collins in WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-2/6, 'DKBL. Verbatim Minutes of the Meeting of the Military Governors with Bizonal Officials, 14.June 1948'.

³ Abelshausen, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland*, pp.140-1. Published German figures for face productivity (*Schichtleistung im Abbau*) begin only in 1948 and therefore do not allow comparison with the pre-war period.

⁴ *ZdKW*, 12, p.54.

⁵ My calculation using the simple formula:

$$\frac{\text{underground productivity}}{\text{face productivity}} = \frac{\text{face shifts}}{\text{underground workforce shifts}}$$

⁶ WWA S22 (OMGUS), CO HISTR BR 3/406-1/22, Undated notes by NGCC towards an official history of the NGCC, Section 2: History of Coal Production since the Occupation.

had been engaged in a considerable amount of development.

A partial explanation is that during the war the proportion of the German labour force who were face workers had declined sharply. Many had become too old for contract wage work and moved into the gentler shift-wage jobs away from the face.¹ In 1938, for example, there were 156,908 German *Gedingearbeiter*, making up some 68 percent of the underground workforce. By 1943 this figure had fallen to 129,661 or 61 percent and in 1946 it was down to 106,697 or 59 percent.² This explains why, as the war came to an end, the face was disproportionately undermanned. However, the influx of new miners rapidly brought the number of contract workers up to the pre-war level and by mid-1948 154,000 men, or 63 percent of the workforce were earning a contract wage.³ So why, in 1948, was the face still so underrepresented in relation to pre-war manning levels and why had the face in fact grown more slowly than the rest of the workforce in the 1946 - 1948 period?⁴

There are a number of reasons for this. The mines were in much poorer shape than they had been in the 1930's and so a fair amount of repair work was unavoidable. Secondly, because of the way the incentive schemes worked, face workers were working nearer to pre-war output norms than the shift-wage earners away from the face.⁵

¹ Virtually all workers employed at the face were in contract wage. Away from the face, there was some contract work, particularly in developing and preparing new seams and ways, and also considerable amount of shift-wage employment in maintenance, repair and haulage.

² Bischoff, 'Arbeiterzahl und Förderanstieg', table 7.

³ Ibid.

⁴ As proven by the fact that the face's share of shifts worked fell.

⁵ It might appear that this is not a matter of conjecture but a proven fact based on the o.m.s. statistics in the table. However the way the statistics are derived means that they are not necessarily an indication of how efficiently the men are working. The o.m.s. is calculated by dividing the mines' output by the number of shifts worked. If, for instance, the mines introduce many new workers to do development work, then these shifts will not immediately contribute to production. The number of shifts worked will go up and the productivity statistics will fall, even though the men may be working just as hard and effectively as before. In other words the o.m.s figures say nothing directly about the (continued overleaf.)

However, a major part of the answer seems to be that German employers were disregarding British instructions and were secretly devoting a considerable proportion of their manpower to rebuilding and extending the mines' capacity, to compensating, in other words, for the lack of development work carried out during the war. Managers were evidently not trying to maximise output by redistributing the workforce. Over the 1946-1948 period, the number of contract workers as a whole grew by almost 50 percent - faster than the growth in the workforce as a whole;¹ in other words contract workers *away from the face* showed a disproportionate increase. This can only have been in development work.² Since the available statistics indicate that German management concentrated the newcomers at the face,³ the growth in the proportion of contract workers away from the face can have been achieved only by moving experienced men to development and other work, while allowing newcomers to fill up the face. If more of the experienced men had been kept there not only would the size of the face workforce have gone up but face productivity might have increased as well because the balance between experienced and inexperienced men would have been more favourable.

The Coal Control Group was well aware of this problem⁴ and in June 1948, at a conference with US officials, Collins argued that the German managers 'have been prepared to restrict their development work when we have ordered it, but they have been able to turn it around and say that it is by order of Military Government. So long as it is that, they will accept orders and carry them out,

efficiency of the individual miners and may merely reflect the deployment of labour within the mine.

¹ Calculated from Bischoff, 'Arbeiterzahl und Förderanstieg', op.cit.

² For the Duisburg area see HStAD, Kalkum, Bergamt Duisburg, 236, Lagebericht for February 1947, which openly linked the slow progress of production with the amount of development and preparatory work, claiming that the planned production increases made these necessary.

³ See above, p.123.

⁴ Collins, 'Progress in Rebuilding the Coal Mining Industry', p.19.

but as soon as left to their own devices they are not giving these instructions...the individual managements of the DKBL are taking the long view. It is a perhaps a good thing in normal times, but it has always been our point of view that the immediate production of coal is rather more important than the long-term policy...'.¹

Yet with its limited staff, there was little the NGCC and its successor organisation could do. As Collins himself argued, over 'such a large industry it has not been possible to exert a very profound control'.² This fact, as well as the Control Group's general reluctance to undermine the DKBL, allowed the colliery managers to continue pursuing their own labour policy.

The spring crisis

The only exception to the UK/USCCG's unwillingness to intervene more forcefully was a short period in April and May, when the positive trend in production was reversed. Daily production fell badly and the Allies began to put on the pressure. At the beginning of May, General Clay wrote to the UK/USCCG to stress that European recovery was dependant on more coal. The April performance, he wrote, might turn out to have disastrous consequences.³ At a meeting with BICO staff, Clay spelt out the position even more clearly: 'The fact remains that we have all these raw materials coming in... If we don't get more coal, it is not one bit of use to bring any of it in...The whole German economy is in a position for a rapid recovery if we can get more coal. Without it, it is not going to go anywhere.'⁴ These comments indicated just how wide the gap had

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-2/6, Verbatim Minutes of the meeting of the Military Governors with Bizonal Officials, 14.6.1948.

² Collins, 'Progress in Rebuilding the Coal Mining Industry', p.6.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS), AG 1948/163/5, Clay to Coalco, 5.5.1948.

⁴ WWA S22(OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-1/38, Verbatim Draft of meeting of General Clay with BICO staff, 14.5.1948.

become between the needs of the economy and the mines' own financial interests.

The DKBL's response was a series of short-term measures such as temporary halts to preparatory and development work and the introduction of a new incentive drive, the *Fettaktion*, whereby the miners received meat and fats for production increases attained in the May-June period. These were not without their success and the DKBL was thus spared from having to revise its recruitment strategy.

Supplying Resources

One key question about workforce regeneration in the controlled economy remains. The factors which hindered efficient deployment of human and material resources in the pits have been analysed in detail. Yet just as symptomatic of the controlled economy as these problems of resource *deployment* were problems of resource *procurement*. As we have seen, almost every aspect of labour policy was bedeviled by the shortage of supplies. Why did it remain so difficult to furnish the mining industry with even the bare minimum of pit supplies, building materials, hostel furnishings, consumer goods and so on? It is to this question which the following chapter addresses itself.

Chapter 4: Supplies in demand. Housing new labour in the pre-currency reform economy

Supply shortages

Towards the end of 1946, men from all over Germany were flocking to the pits, seeing in mining a way of keeping themselves above water, if not above ground. The key problem of the early era had been solved. Welcome as it was, this new influx nevertheless presented the authorities with new tasks and challenges, above all the problems of housing, equipping and feeding the newcomers. Beyond the need to provide that minimum standard of equipment and accommodation without which it would be impossible to set the men to work, it was well recognised that morale and productivity of both established and new miners would benefit if the *quality* of existing housing and supplies could be improved.¹

Over the following period an enormous amount of energy was spent on procuring resources. Yet the drive for coal was continually put in jeopardy by missing or poor quality supplies. The industry lived from hand to mouth and some of the materials necessary to increase coal production never arrived. As chapter 3 has already shown, the incentive schemes were dogged by problems of delivery and quality.² Food was periodically in very short supply. Work clothing was sufficient only to kit out new recruits to the meanest of standards and American experts reckoned that the miners were getting less than half the clothing supplies that production demanded. Many recruits found that they had to wait for up to a month for their gear, during which time they could not work and were

¹ See comments of August Schmidt in 'Minutes of the Committee to Investigate coal production 1946. Visit of Russian, French and US experts to the Ruhr.', op.cit.

² DGBA File, 'Gewerkschaftliches Zonensekretariat, Britische Zone, 1947, 1', VfW to Economics Ministry NRW and others, 25.3.1947, appendix 11.

required to pay for lodging and food.¹ In summer 1947 shortages became so acute that recruitment had to be temporarily restricted.² The lack of pit supplies, where the newcomers' need for pneumatic picks, lamps and so on constituted but a small part of the mines' general demand, became increasingly desperate. In 1946, 1947 and 1948 the collieries received less than half the steel required.³ The quality of the lubricating oils, electrical installations, conveyor belts and air hose delivered was so bad that many items lasted only a couple of days. This in turn had a deleterious effect on morale.⁴ In many cases, it was not to be until the currency reform that the quantity and quality of deliveries began appreciably to improve.⁵

Rather than attempt to analyse the progress and problems in procuring all these different commodities, some of which bore only peripherally on labour force regeneration, the following account focuses on one of the most complex supply problems of all: miners' housing. A number of the challenges thrown up by housing were unique, but in many respects the transfer, allocation and deployment of housing and building supplies in the miners' housing programme offer a model of the problems of resource control in the pre-currency reform economy.

Housing policy in the pre-incentives era 1945-1946

No one entering the Ruhr in 1945 could fail to be struck, even moved, by the sheer scale of housing destruction. Henry Collins recalled that, 'In my early travels

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), AG 45-46/103/2, 'Report on Inspection Trip to the Ruhr Coal Mines', 10. June 1946, p.4; Social Survey Report No.5, op.cit., p.9.

² WWA F35, 493, GMSO, Circular Nr. DI 991, 15.8.1947; F35, 494, GMSO, Circular DI 1864, 27.11.1947.

³ WWA S22(OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-1/38, Verbatim Draft - Meeting of General Clay with BICO Staff, 14.5.1948; WWA S22(OMGUS), AG 1948/163/5, Report by A.F.Marshall, UK/US Coal Control Group, on Mine Supplies, 10.5.1948; PRO FO 1005, 380, COPROD/ P(47)2, BECG Paper, Mining Supplies, 29.1.1947.

⁴ As note 3.

⁵ OBADA I 8010, OBAD Lageberichte, 4 Quarter 1948 & 1 and 2 Quarter 1949.

around the coalfield I saw just vast areas of rubble and yet, at night, pin points of light appeared in the ruins over wide areas. The miners and their families were living in the cellars beneath the ruins.¹ Before the war, there had been 1,217,000 dwellings in the greater Ruhr area (SVR-territory). The war had destroyed 456,000 of them and left only 196,000 undamaged.² Of the quarter of a million miners' houses before the war, only a fifth were undamaged while over a quarter were totally destroyed.³ Even in 1947, after considerable repairs, there were still only half the inhabitable rooms in the Ruhr that there had been in 1939.⁴

Initially, the repair of miners' housing could not be given any great priority by the British since it was not strictly necessary for restarting production. What progress there was in repairing miners' housing can be largely attributed to the collieries. They proved willing to allow part of the building materials contingent intended for pit repairs to be diverted to miners' housing, particularly when it was owned by the mine. This revealed once again the employers' unwillingness to give reviving production the urgency which the British wanted and their tendency to give the wishes of the established workforce greater priority. Even more than clothing and other supplies, building materials proved particularly hard to control.⁵ This explains how it was that by the end of 1945, 37,000 miners' houses had received some sort of

¹ Collins, *Mining Memories*, p.28

² HStad NW9, 54, Wohnungsbezirksstelle Ruhr (WBSR) to WAM, 3.11.1947. Appendix: 'Wohnraumbewirtschaftung im Ruhrgebiet'.

³ Collins Papers, Papers from the Anglo-American Conversations regarding German coal production, August-September 1947, (henceforth 'Washington Papers'), A2, paper 1, 'Report on Miners' Housing. Brief for Sir William Strang prepared by Manpower Division'.

⁴ HStad NW9, 54, WBSR to WAM, 3.11.1947. Appendix: 'Wohnraumbewirtschaftung im Ruhrgebiet'.

⁵ For evidence of the scale of employers' appropriations see HStad NW53, 643, Landrat Ernst to Ministerpräsident Arnold, 17.8.1948; BAK Z40, 451, Lt.Col. H.P.Felder to Director General Housing Branch, Manpower Division, 14.5.1946, MP/48054/6/MG, p.2 & HQ NGCC, Memo, 'Building material for the repair of miners' housing', Essen 1947.

repair.¹ The British turned a blind eye to the fact that many of the repairs carried out made use of materials officially intended for colliery rebuilding. As a Manpower Division report put it, it was 'not considered advisable to interfere with this extra source of supply'.²

As soon as it became apparent that new labour would have to be recruited from outside the Ruhr, the British authorities began to consider ways of increasing the amount of available living space. Their first step, in August 1945, was to prevent refugees from taking up housing that could be used by miners by declaring the Ruhr a restricted area.³ Most parts of the Ruhr were affected although in some areas refugee transports continued to arrive until 1947.⁴

To make additional room available for miners the authorities had two types of 'resource' at their disposal: existing living space in the Ruhr on the one hand and building materials to create additional room on the other. Both were in very short supply. The speedier option of the two appeared to be the reallocation of existing living space, either by using it more intensively or by evacuating local families. In autumn 1945 various plans were mooted, including the evacuation of some 80,000 Ruhr citizens to make way for more miners.⁵ Yet what is striking is how circumspect was the attempt to put it into operation. No coercion was to be used and in the end the few attempts to move families failed

¹ HStad NW9, 112, Verbandsdirektor SVR to WAM, 18.11.1949, Appendix: 'Aufstellung aller statistischen Angaben über das Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm' (henceforth: 'SVR Aufstellung (1949)').

² BAK Z40, 451, Lt.Col.Fielder to Housing Branch, Manpower Division, 14.5.1946.

³ Falk Wiesemann und Uwe Kleinert, 'Flüchtlinge und wirtschaftlicher Wiederaufbau in der britischen Besatzungszone', in Petzina and Euchner (eds), *Wirtschaftspolitik*, pp.297 - 326, here p.300.

⁴ By April 1947, when a Social Ministry decree closed the entire Ruhr to refugee transports, there were an estimated 355,000 refugees in the area. See HStad NW9, 55, WAM IIIC (WB) 868, Vermerk 14.2.1947; HStad NW9,54, WBSR to WAM, Abt IIIC, 3.11.1947, appendix: 'Wohnraumbewirtschaftung im Ruhrgebiet unter Berücksichtigung der Bergarbeiter-Belange'.

⁵ Wiesemann and Kleinert, 'Flüchtlinge und wirtschaftlicher Wiederaufbau', p.300.

because the evacuees rejected the proffered accommodation.¹ As in the incentives question, the British were unwilling to pursue a policy of ruthlessly favouring the mines.

First aid repairs

This left the possibility of constructing or repairing accommodation to create space for the newcomers. In November 1945, shortage of accommodation began to interfere with the progress of recruitment² and in addition 'Operation Clobber', which was supposed to provide 30,000 POW's, was pending. It was therefore with some urgency that the British Manpower staff called on German building experts to consider ways of making more housing available for the miners, while the NGCC called on the collieries to do their utmost in creating new accommodation by repairs to houses and to barrack accommodation.³ To a certain extent this was successful. British fears of an impending public health catastrophe led to an acceleration of housing repairs generally and within this programme of 'first aid' repairs, the mines enjoyed some priority.⁴ The problem was that these repairs were mainly aimed at protecting existing miners from the weather. While no doubt necessary, this meant that little additional space was created.

What seems then to have happened is that the failure of 'Operation Clobber' was tacitly used as an excuse to avoid finding ways of building additional miners' accommodation. During the following period, as we have seen, the workforce

¹ HStad NW9, 55, WBSR to WAM Abteilung IIIC, 22.4.1947, point 6.

² NW9, 147, Oberpräsident der Nord-Rheinprovinz, IIa 5203, to Abteilung Bau (im Hause), 25.11.1945.

³ HStad NW9, 147, *ibid*; Minutes of meeting with Dr. Baerlecken on 30.11.1945, 1.12.1945; Minutes of meeting with Oberbaurat Heller on 18.12.1945, 18.12.1945; WWA F29, 378, HQ IRCD, Circular to general directors, 10.12.1945.

⁴ The housing office, Ruhr district, to Oberpräsident, Westfalen, 8.10.1945; PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46) 6: Manpower Division paper on housing for miners, September 1946.

barely increased because of the failure to hold on to the recruits. Although new and better billets and hostels might have altered the situation, the slow growth in the workforce took the immediate pressure off the housing authorities. In May 1946, for example, so many of the former inhabitants had fled that there was room for 20,000 new recruits in the camps.¹ Moreover, most new arrivals did not require housing because the Manpower Authorities concentrated more than ever on recruiting local labour. Between 1 April 1946 and 2 August, for example, 18,000 of the 23,000 men directed to the mines came from the Ruhr.²

Thus the repairs programme moved into a lower gear. From January 1946, the coal allocation for all 'First Aid' repairs was cut (the civilian housing crisis being deemed to be over) and mining was not excepted. The problem was that there was too little coal. Because of the exports drive, secondary industries such as building materials production came low down the list of priorities for coal while civilian housing could not be given priority for those building materials that were available.³ In the second and third quarters of 1946, for example, only 4 percent of the coal allocated to British Zone use was assigned to building materials production.⁴ Until the beginning of the year, the meagre output of new bricks and cement had been augmented by existing (wartime and pre-war) stocks. By January-February 1946, those reserves had run out.⁵

¹ Ibid.

² 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946. Visit of Russian, French and US experts to the Ruhr.', op.cit.

³ Collins Papers, Loose Paper, Report on Miners' Housing, AGC/22, Gen/16, August 14, 1947, Enclosure 'B', Ruhr housing building materials, appendix 'A'; PRO FO 943, 184, A.C.A. Committee of coal experts, Special Minutes of the 22nd Meeting of Coal Experts Committee, 6.9.1946, App. A(3): Comments of French Representatives on Survey of British Zone.

⁴ In turn, miners' housing absorbed (in the case of bricks and cement) only 2% of those materials. It also received less than 1% of available wood. Collins Papers, Loose Paper, Report on Miners' Housing, AGC/22, Gen/16, August 14, 1947, Enclosure 'B', Ruhr housing building materials, appendix 'A'.

⁵ PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46)6, Manpower Division paper, 'Housing for Miners', September 1946.

Fewer houses were repaired than before but, more than that, the mines' share within the overall Ruhr repairs programme actually fell. Why was this? During the First Aid programme, existing stocks of building materials had been administered by the Royal Engineers but at the beginning of 1946 they were withdrawn and the job handed over to the municipalities.¹ The Royal Engineers had faithfully followed British priorities and ensured that the mines received favoured treatment. Until the beginning of 1946 miners' housing, which made up about around 10 percent of the Ruhr total, had received almost 50 percent of repairs.² The municipalities proved very hostile to this uneven treatment and now tried to correct what they saw as an imbalance. Under pressure and understaffed, Military Government did not feel in a position to override them.³

Nothing much was done to change the position until autumn 1946. In spring 1946, it is true, Manpower Division produced a five year housing programme for the whole of the British Zone including Miners' Housing. Yet since the promulgation of the plan involved no extra supplies to the mines, its impact was very limited.⁴ A report on miners' housing produced in May 1946 acknowledged that apart 'from generally and slowly improving the repair of existing houses, having due regard to the amount of materials available, nothing more could be done unless a really new line is taken relative to repairs and new housing'.⁵

The lack of progress in enlarging the available housing stock and the continued

¹ HStad NW53, 391, Lehr to Col. Dalby, 25.2.1946, appendix: Bau 90 to HQ Military Government, North Rhine region, Düsseldorf, 21.2.1946; SVR Aufstellung (1949), op.cit.; 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit.

² 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit., esp. comments of Colonel Fielder.

³ See, for example, a later meeting between municipal and regional housing officials in HStad NW9,55, 'Niederschrift über die auf Anordnung des Wiederaufbauministeriums einberufene Besprechung der Wohnungsamtsleiter im Verbandsgebiet am 13.2.1947', 15.2.1947.

⁴ Collins Papers, Loose Paper, Report on Miners' Housing, AGC/22, Gen/16, August 14, 1947, Enclosure 'A': Report on Miners' Housing.

⁵ BAK Z40, 451, Lt.Col.Fielder to Housing Branch, Manpower Division, 14.5.1946, 'Subject: Miners' Housing'.

reluctance to use drastic measures of evacuation and relocation were amply illustrated by 'Operation Suds', an ill-fated programme which had the Ruhr housing authorities in a lather for much of summer 1946. The Foreign Office had suggested that there was a chance that 12,000 Sudeten miners, along with their families, would soon be expelled to the US Zone from Czechoslovakia and could be diverted to the Ruhr.¹ Such men would clearly be an extremely desirable addition to the workforce and so the British authorities set to work trying to find accommodation for the in all 50,000 people. There was no time to build accommodation for the newcomers so that it would be a matter of evicting existing Ruhr inhabitants. Yet the British were understandably unwilling to incur the odium that this would involve. As the officer in charge of the recently created Ruhr Housing Authority explained to visiting experts, the situation was 'nothing short of dreadful'. There was no vacant accommodation for families:²

We cannot move existing miners, but we can move widows of miners and the mine pensioners. We can also move the butcher, the baker and other members of the community, but if we do this we shall upset the economic life of the district. The only alternative left to us is to move these widows and pensioners and from a preliminary account we have taken, there will be a considerable amount of trouble....They will have to leave their gardens and the houses that they have patched with their own hands. It is very difficult to foresee the result as it will cause considerable unrest in every area.

Some relief seemed likely when the British army offered to provide 2,000 Nissen huts for the miners. In fact, the Nissen hut programme made little headway. Though intended as an additional source of accommodation on top of existing supplies, they in fact required considerable amounts of wood to erect so that they were often more costly in materials than repairs to lightly damaged housing.³ By June 1947, only 240 miners had been housed in Nissen huts.⁴

¹ PRO FO 943, 190, Telegram from Foreign Office to Prague, 6.8.1946.

² 'Minutes of the Committee to investigate coal production 1946.', op.cit., esp. 2nd Meeting, 5.8.1946, Col. Fielder's remarks on housing.

³ Collins Papers, Loose Paper, Report on Miners' Housing, AGC/22, Gen/16, August 14, 1947, Enclosure 'A': Report on Miners' Housing.

⁴ HStad NW 73, 135, SVR, Miners' housing programme progress report, Mai 1947.

Because it reflected attitudes that were to become much more significant later on, it is worth noting that the other reason for slow progress was the determined resistance to the Nissen huts from German housing experts and above all from Dr. Rappaport in the German Labour and Housing Agency ('Beratungsstelle für Arbeit, Siedlungs- und Wohnungswesen', later part of the Zentralamt für Arbeit (ZAA)).¹ Rappaport had long been closely associated with housing construction in the Ruhr, having been the director of the SVR from its inception at the beginning of the 1920's. He believed that the Nissen huts were not only wasteful of scarce wood, but also believed that living in them involved economic and above all social costs that were unacceptable.²

Als behelfsmäßig muß ich auch neue Wohnbauten ansehen, die weder Keller noch Dachraum haben. Durch das Fehlen dieser Bauteile, die für die Wohnbauten bei dem deutschen Klima und den deutschen Lebensbedingungen unerlässlich notwendig sind, wird die Lebenshaltung so verteuert, daß in Wirklichkeit solche Neubauten keinen normalen Wohnwert haben. Auch hier muß ich also fragen, ob sich Deutschland in seiner heutigen finanziellen Lage den Luxus nicht normaler und mithin vollauf brauchbarer Wohnungen leisten darf.

It was an ingenious argument that, precisely because Germany was so poor, only good standard, long-lasting buildings were economical, and it was one that was to continue to cut right across the British attempt to achieve speedy, provisional solutions in the interests of coal production.

In the event, Operation Suds was a wash-out because the Sudeten miners were held back by the Czechoslovakian authorities.³ A Manpower Division report noted with diplomatic understatement that 'from a housing point of view this is a relief'.⁴ Those billets that had been prepared for the Sudetens were eventually made available to other members of the workforce.⁵ However, the relief did not

¹ The Beratungsstelle was founded in March 1946 and became the 'Hauptamt für Arbeitsverwaltung in der britischen Zone' at the end of July. The new name, 'Zentralamt für Arbeit', was adopted in November.

² BAK Z40, 350, Rappaport to Joll, 11.11.1946.

³ PRO FO 943, 190, Simpson to Gledhill, 21.9.1946.

⁴ PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46)6, Manpower Division Paper on housing for miners, September 1946.

⁵ WWA F26, 782, RCD1, Circular to managing directors, 23.9.1946.

last long because in late autumn the accelerating pace of workforce growth put the Ruhr housing stock under renewed pressure. The housing situation was just as unprepared to receive this influx as it had been in 1945.

The only major difference between the situation in autumn 1945 and a year later was that in the meantime a number of important bodies had been created which were to play a key role in the miners' housing programme. The Beratungsstelle für Arbeit, Siedlungs- und Wohnungswesen, a zonal organisation charged with assisting Military Government in housing and manpower questions, was brought into the miners' housing question some time around June and July.¹ Philip Rappaport, the head of the Beratungsstelle's housing section was to be doubly influential because he was also director of the reestablished SVR, an organisation that was to be more closely involved with miners' housing than any other in the coming years. Another important development in the summer of 1946 was Manpower Division's creation of a Ruhr Housing Office (RHO) to institute a more coherent and coordinated approach to miners' housing.² RHO and SVR were to work closely together. Finally, in August 1946 the ministries of the newly created Land Nordrhein-Westfalen began to take shape, including the Reconstruction Ministry (WAM) under the Communist, Hugo Paul. By Military Government decree, housing became the responsibility of the individual Land governments, and thus the Reconstruction Ministry was to exert a decisive influence in the Ruhr.³

¹ BAK Z40, 345, Rappaport, Deutsche Beratungsstelle für Siedlungs- u. Wohnungswesen to Dr. Weißer, 20.7.1946.

² PRO FO 1005, 1821, Manpower Interim Report for month ending 9th July 1946.

³ HStAD NW10, 91, Translation of a letter from RGO HQ Military Government NRW to Ministerpräsident NRW, 10.4.1947, translated annex: 'Erläuterung der Verantwortlichkeiten, die nach der mit Anordnung Nr.1 abgeänderten Verordnung Nr.57 auf das Land und die Kommunalverwaltungen übertragen sind'.

The half-hearted priority, September 1946 - February 1947

In line with the general shifts in attitude detailed in the previous chapter the approach to miners' housing began to change. In July 1946, the Commander in Chief of the British Zone authorised Manpower Division to draw up a more positive rebuilding programme.¹ In September the quadripartite Committee of Experts' report contained the recommendation that housing conditions should be given the 'highest priority in any scheme for increasing coal production'. During the Committee sessions themselves the French and the Americans had been very critical of what they saw as the inadequate priority accorded to the mines² and the report recommended that a programme of 'substantial repair and reconstruction including temporary houses and hutments' should be commenced immediately and the allocation of building materials increased.³

In response, the British authorities raised the coal allocation for building materials production by 50,000t a month, or about 50 percent.⁴ At the same time, the priority accorded to mining was stepped up at a number of different levels. Though building materials production was being increased by only 50 percent, the allocation of materials to miners' housing was trebled.⁵ Manpower Division developed a new five-year programme for miners' housing which foresaw 20 percent of all housing repairs in the British Zone going to the

¹ PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46)6, Manpower Division paper, 'Housing for Miners', September 1946.

² PRO FO 943, 184, Doc. 74, A.C.A. Committee of coal experts, Special Minutes of the 22nd Meeting of Coal Experts Committee, 6.9.1946, appendices .

³ PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46)2, Report of the Committee of Coal Experts, 16.9.1946.

⁴ BAK Z2, 53, 7. Sitzung des Zonenbeirates, 174: Antrag Reilmann/ Hoffmann, Annex 38: Memo from the Coordinating Office of the ZAC (Britischer Verbindungsstab), Ref: HQ/14107/1/ZAC, 'betr.: Wohnungslage im Bergbau', 16.9.1946; BAK Z40, 451, DCOS (Policy), CCG(BE), Berlin to Standard Distribution List G Ref AHQ/8400/Sec. G., Subject Miners' Housing, November 1946..

⁵ BAK Z40, 451, DCOS (Policy), CCG(BE), Berlin to Standard Distribution List G, Ref AHQ/8400/Sec. G., Subject Miners' Housing, November 1946.

miners.¹ At a lower level, the building officers of the Ruhr municipalities were directed to give mining greater priority.²

Even had these decisions been implemented, it is unlikely that they would have prevented a housing bottleneck from developing in the Ruhr. The Manpower Division housing programme, which envisaged around 4,000 repairs a month,³ was not going to keep pace with a recruitment programme that endeavoured to bring 2,000 men a week to the mines.⁴ The volume of repairs was in itself modest. In addition, the programme was too heavily orientated towards the repair of existing dwellings, rather than the construction of hostels. Past experience showed that the volume of repairs planned would result in only a small number of rooms becoming available for additional labour, probably at most 1,500 a month.⁵ Though some hostels were planned, these would accommodate at most 1,700 new recruits in the first year.⁶ Possibly, Manpower Division envisaged a more rigorous utilisation of all repaired space for new labour. Yet no directives were given to this effect and it was not until 1947 that single men were billeted in repaired apartments.⁷ More likely, Manpower Division made no attempt to link its housing programme with recruiting targets, because it did not want to face the unpleasant choices that a recognition of the true position would involve. In particular, it might find itself forced to

¹ PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46)6, Manpower Division paper, 'Housing for Miners', September 1946.

² HStad NW53, 465, HQ MG Reg.Bez. Düsseldorf to Oberpräsident, 12.9.1946.

³ Calculated from the five-year plan figures given in BAK Z40, 451, Memo, 20.3.1947.

⁴ An NGCC report in December talked of absorbing as many as 500- 600 recruits a day, or over 3,000 a week. PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD/P(46)21, NGCC Progress Report, 22.12.1946.

⁵ See figures of room gain in HStad NW73, 260, Bericht über den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau nach dem Stande vom Ende März 1947, Table: 'Instandsetzungen im Bereich des SVR'.

⁶ Calculation from five-year plan figures in HStad NW73, 282, Director, RRP, Programme for the Erection of Miners' Dwellings "Ruhr 47/48", Appendix 'B'.

⁷ HStad NW9,55, WBSR to WAM, 'Einweisung von alleinstehenden Bergleuten in mehrräumige Wohnungen', 28.6.1947.

give the miners even greater priority in relation to other repair programmes. Yet even the modest measures in the five-year programme had been introduced with great reluctance and the Division warned that the inadequate housing situation for other groups in the population might make the programme impossible to sustain.¹

In any case, the new coal allocation did not materialise. In the fourth quarter of 1946, the monthly allocation to coal went up by about 20,000t and not 50,000t as originally intended, while in the first quarter of 1947, it fell to little over half what it had been *before* the increase had been introduced.² This was partly because coal production did not increase quite as fast as anticipated (although it *had* been progressing favourably),³ while the approach of winter increased the demands on coal. Yet building materials' share of the available coal fell so dramatically that it is clear the authorities were not even attempting to honour the priority decisions of September and October.⁴ Instead, they continued to give exports priority, while at the same time making substantial increases to 'essential civilian' requirements, including, for the first time, an allocation for domestic fuel.⁵ The costs of this increased allocation were borne by secondary industries, above all building materials, but also engineering and chemicals.⁶ Very probably the 'civilian' allocations (which also included Military Government administration) were unavoidable although they were twice as high as those at the beginning of 1946. Yet, sooner or later, Military Government

¹ PRO FO 1005, 379, COPROD P(46)6, Manpower Division paper, 'Housing for Miners', September 1946.

² Collins Papers, Loose Paper, Report on Miners' Housing, AGC/22, Gen/16, August 14, 1947, Enclosure 'B', Appendix 'A': Allocation of Coal for building materials in British Zone'.

³ See table 2, p.119.

⁴ Collins Papers, Report on Miners' Housing, Enclosure 'B', Appendix A, op.cit.

⁵ Abelshausen, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland*, p.144, table 43; Collins Papers, Report on Miners' Housing, Enclosure 'B', Appendix B, op.cit.

⁶ Ibid.

would have to accept the fact that unless it put more coal into secondary industries, the primary industries, above all mining would suffer. Not only housing but also mining supplies were becoming a serious bottleneck for coal production.

What was the impact of these allocations on the volume of repairs? Statistics for the period are few and far between and there is good reason to believe that those available are not very accurate. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the overall volume (ie for miners and non-miners) of repairs in the Ruhr slowed down towards the end of 1946. Not only were few extra building materials reaching the Ruhr but in addition the houses now coming up for repair were more heavily damaged. At the end of 1946, the monthly completion rate of Ruhr housing overall was as low as 4,000 dwelling units.¹ Within this diminishing repairs programme, it is true, miners' share rose considerably. Throughout much of 1946, about 40 percent of Ruhr repairs had gone to miners' housing, but in the final quarter this rose to between 60 and 75 percent.² In other words, within the Ruhr, miners' housing was being given a clear new priority so that around 3,000 miners' dwelling units a month.³ This was still below the level of the (in any case inadequate) Manpower Division programme, and achieved only at the cost of other Ruhr inhabitants. At the beginning of 1947, the general cutback in coal supplies and building materials production brought mining repairs even further down, in March to as little as 1,500 dwelling units (d.u.'s).⁴

The tightness of coal supply given the continued commitment to exports was not

¹ Calculated from SVR Aufstellung (1949), op.cit.

² HStad NW9, 112, SVR, First Aid Housing Repairs Ruhr area, reports for North-Rhine and Westphalia, Reports March 1947.

³ SVR Aufstellung (1949), op.cit.

⁴ HStad NW9, 112, SVR, First Aid Housing Repairs Ruhr area, reports for North-Rhine and Westphalia, March 1947; HStad NW9,55, Minutes of meeting on 22.2.1947, remarks of WAM representatives.

the only reason for the slow progress of repairs. The other main constraint was the massive black market into which flowed a substantial proportion, 30 percent according to one informed estimate, of the available supplies.¹ Despite all controls, much of the building work in the Ruhr was on shops and offices which by no stretch of the imagination could be considered essential buildings. The system of housing licensing encouraged the black market, because authorisation for repairs was generally given as long as the applicant could show that materials were available. Housing officials tended to turn a blind eye to unauthorised building or receipt of unauthorised building materials because the low level of fines made prosecution worthless.² Here was yet another example of the uncontrollable, 'controlled' economy.

It was therefore almost inevitable that housing should rapidly become a bottleneck. On 31 January, the NRW Manpower Department learned that there was no barrack or hostel accommodation left.³ Suitable billets had run out and other types of building could not be converted for miners' use because of the dearth of accommodation stores - beds, cupboards, tables, chairs and blankets. For the previous four days, all new non-local recruits had had to be transferred to Aachen coal field because there was nowhere to house them in the Ruhr.⁴ This was a major blow to the whole recruitment programme.

Intensified use of existing living space

Whatever impact the crisis was to have on the repairs and reconstruction programme, in the short term the only measure swift enough was the

¹ WWA S22(OMGUS), Manpower 7/43-1/47, George S.Wheeler to Director, Manpower Division, Recruiting of workers for the Ruhr, 24.3.1947.

² Ibid.

³ HStad NW9, 55, Land Mp. Dept. NRW to WAM, 3.2.1947.

⁴ HStad NW9, 55, WBSR to WAM, Abt. VI, betr.: Unterbringung von Bergarbeitern, 3.2.1947.

commandeering of existing living space and supplies of bedding and furniture. On the 1 February a crisis meeting was held at Villa Hügel, the former Krupp villa where the NGCC had its headquarters. Represented were the NGCC, the NRW Manpower Department, the Ruhr Housing Office, the GMSO and the Reconstruction Ministry.¹ A whole battery of measures to achieve more effective utilisation of available room were proposed. Private accommodation should be more rigorously requisitioned and proven workers should be transferred from the camps into the accommodation. Miners were to be given absolute priority in the allocation of living space ahead of all other housing programmes. Housing inspection to identify inadequately used living space was to be intensified and buildings at present not classified as dwelling space were to be reviewed for possible use as temporary lodgings. The voluntary evacuation of non-miners was to be considered. Finally, the new miners themselves were initially to be given only a temporary residence permit which could be revoked if they left the mines.²

Most of the policies implemented over the following months were those suggested at this meeting. In February, the WAM demanded a more vigorous housing inspection and instructed the municipalities that *all* rooms discovered by the inspection were to be made available to the mining programme.³ A steady stream of instructions strengthening and clarifying the miners' priority followed throughout this and the following year.⁴ At the same time, intensive efforts were undertaken to improve the supply of furniture and, after repeated

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid and HStAD NW 9,55, WBSR to Oberstadtdirektoren, 'Betr.: Unterbringung von Bergarbeiterzuführungen', 1.2.1947; WAM to Bate, 6.2.1947; HStAD NW 53, 465, Translation of letter from Chief Manpower Officer, Mil Govt., NRW to WAM, 'Betr.: Unterbringung von auszubildenden Arbeitskräften für die Bergwerke', 3.2.1947.

³ HStAD NW9,55, WAM (Wohnraumbewirtschaftung) to Oberstadt/Kreisdirektoren, 'Unterbringung von Bergarbeitern im Ruhrgebiet', 20.2.1947.

⁴ See HStAD NW9,55, WAM (Wohnraumbewirtschaftung), Referat Bergarbeiterunterkunft, Essen, to Dept. IVC, 1.7.1948.

representations from the Manpower Authorities, miners were placed very high on the priority list for furniture allocation, preceded only by the Occupation Forces and certain other mandatory customers.¹

A key development was the creation in March of a 'Coordinating Committee', founded and chaired by the head of the NRW Manpower Department, Phillip Bate.² This Committee brought British and German manpower, housing and mining officials together on a fortnightly basis to coordinate supplies and information. The municipal housing departments, for example, were instructed to phone through weekly reports on available living space to the WAM's Ruhr office and these were coordinated with information about labour demand and availability.³

These measures were rewarded with considerable success. Over the year as a whole 23,000 billets for miners were found in private lodgings. An additional number were created in temporary accommodation such as the halls of public houses and so on.⁴ As the chairman of the Coordinating Committee observed, 'any suggestion that the Ruhr could not accommodate the men had been disproved immediately the committee had been established'.⁵

In part, success was due to immanent features of the housing market: 'Die fast völlige Lückenlosigkeit, mit der die Dauernutzgüter Wohnungen erfaßt werden können, die Unmöglichkeit sie zu verheimlichen, zu transportieren, die Leichtigkeit, mit der Verwaltungsmaßnahmen getroffen und durchgesetzt

¹ HStad NW53, 465, Coordinating Committee, Minutes of 3rd Meeting, 3.4.1947; HStad NW9,55, Coordinating Committee, Minutes of 7th Meeting, 2.5.1947.

² HStad NW9,55, Bate, Land Manpower Dept. to NGCC, 14.3.1947.

³ HStad NW9,55, WBSR to Oberstadtdirektoren, 'Betr.: Unterbringung von Bergarbeitern', 17.2.1947; Minutes of the meeting on 22.2.1947 in Mannesmannhaus, 22.2.1947.

⁴ HStad NW9, 112, WAM, Dept IVC (WB), Memos, 'Betr.: Unterbringung der Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet', 10.1.1948 & 12.1.1948.

⁵ HStad NW9,55, Coordinating Committee, Minutes of 7th Meeting, 2.5.1947.

werden können...'¹ all meant that the enormous inefficiency that characterised attempts to control other types of resource was avoided here.

There were two other prerequisites for the success of the operation which had not applied, say, six months earlier. First, it would have been inconceivable without the existence of a fairly well functioning administration. Until the establishment of the regional ministry, even modest controls over the municipalities had been impossible. Secondly, it was only in the new political climate of a public and demonstrable commitment to speedy reconstruction that the British authorities were prepared to take steps involving considerable costs and distress to other members of the population. That the British remained deeply conscious of the sensitivity of the whole operation was amply demonstrated by the fact that Military Government forbade all public pronouncements about the miners' housing programme unless endorsed by Military Government's Public Relations department.² But they could be confident that the German administration would support their endeavours. Within the German housing administration it is true that different departments showed varying degrees of willingness to engage in drastic measures of forcible requisitioning and evacuation. The most hostile continued to be the municipal housing officers.³ Yet the Ministry's own Ruhr housing office (Wohnungsbezirkstelle Ruhr) was uncompromisingly in favour of priority for the mines and proposed, among other measures, evacuating a local DP camp and transferring pensioners and widows from mining accommodation to the camp.

¹ Friedrich Lütge, 'Kapitalmarkt und Wohnungsbau. Einige knappe Hinweise auf einige umfangreiche Probleme', in *Deutsche Siedlungs- und Wohnungspolitik. Gegenwartsproblematik und Zukunftsaspekte. Festschrift z. 25 jährigen Bestehen des Institutes für Siedlungs- und Wohnungswesen der Westfälischen Wilhelmsuniversität Münster*, Cologne 1946, pp.151-175, here, p.67.

² HStAD NW9,55, WAM, Dept. III C(WB), Memo, 4.2.1947.

³ Eg. HStAD NW9,57, WBSR to WAM, Dept IVC (Wohnraumbewirtschaftung), 'Betr.: Belegung der im Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm erstellten Wohnungen', 12.5.1948.

'eine durchaus einwandfreie Art (der Unterbringung)', according to the office!¹

Of course, there were still limits to the social costs or public resentment which the authorities were prepared to contemplate. No forced evacuations were made and voluntary evacuations were approached so cautiously that very few appear to have taken place.² Even in the case of mine-owned property, evictions of non-miners seem to have been the exception rather than the rule. An illustrative example happened in Dorstfeld where a mine, unusually, *did* try to evict all non-miners from colliery housing. The families refused to leave. The local Military Government representatives ordered the housing department to evict them. The department, unwilling to be dragged into the affair, pointed out that it had no police powers and suggested the British troops should do the job. The local commander, no doubt similarly disinclined, refused and instructed the housing department to enlist the support of the German police. The police in turn would not cooperate until permission had been given from the responsible Military Government security official. It seems that permission was never given.³

Building castles in the air: the Miners' Housing Programme 'Ruhr 47/48'

Even had all the rooms requisitioned gone to *new* miners, they could not alone have met new labour's requirements. The manpower target at the beginning of 1947 was to bring in 1,700 workers from outside the Ruhr each week, of whom only 500 were to replace wastage, the remaining 1,200 representing a genuine new requirement for accommodation.⁴ In any case, the housing programme

¹ HStad NW9,55, WBSR, Report, Essen 6.3.1947.

² HStad 9, 54, WBSR to Sub-Regional Manpower Office, Essen, 'Betr.: Ausnutzung der in Gevelsberg freigegebenen Häuser für Essener Familien', 12.7.1947.

³ StaM Regierung Arnsberg, 5.429, Stadtverwaltung Lünen to Regierungspräsident Arnsberg, 28.9.1946.

⁴ WWA S22(OMGUS), Manpower 7/43-1/47, OMGUS Public Relations Office, Statement for joint Anglo-American release at 1900 hours. 31.3.1947.

had to respond to the established workforce's needs as well. This might well improve productivity. Even if it did not, there was little doubt that concentrating all supplies on the newcomers would cause resentment among the established men and the risk of production losses.

Thus, more housing was needed. Short of mass evictions, little more could be expected through inspection and requisitioning of existing property. The only alternative was to increase the volume of building work. Yet in the first quarter of 1947, the coal allocation to miners' housing had fallen to an all time low, amounting to only a fraction of even the Manpower Division programme's modest requirements.¹

As before, coal was the missing ingredient. The low allocations to domestic building materials production were being exacerbated by a general shortage of transport which allowed pithead stockpiles of coal to double between January and February 1947.² No one could accuse manpower officials or the North German Coal Control of not recognising the dangers of such limited house-building. They made repeated and vigorous protests at the declining construction rates, yet in March 1947 further cuts in the coal allotted appeared imminent.³ The pressure came from the urgent export programme. Both Britain and the US were as committed as ever to providing France with Ruhr coal, a policy which was as costly as it was understandable. A US manpower official recorded a British colleague as saying that, 'in the anxiety to increase exports this year, the allocations were in effect establishing limits which would

¹ HStAD NW73, 481, Der Verbandsdirektor des SVR, Programm für den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau 'Ruhr 1947/1948', 28.3.1947.

² Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland*, p.144, table 44.

³ PRO FO 1005, 380, NGCC progress report, 15.2.947; WWA S22(OMGUS), Manpower 7/43-1/47, George S.Wheeler to Director, Manpower Division, 24.3.1947, Recruiting of workers for the Ruhr.

operate for years to come'.¹

It was clear that something had to give. To a certain extent, the authorities resorted to the old solution of concentrating on local labour so as to ease demands on housing.² Yet this was an expensive solution which would ultimately cost more in terms of labour losses for other essential industries in the Ruhr than it would benefit the economy in terms of saving building materials. Really, the only answer was to redistribute coal and building supplies and accept the social, political or economic costs elsewhere that this would produce.

A tentative step had been made in February when the British Manpower authorities invited the NRW Reconstruction Ministry to outline the requirements for housing the mines' present and projected labour force. The British brief was very general and did not stipulate a limit to the material or financial costs involved, specifying only that in order to encourage the newcomers to stay camps and hostels were to be avoided as far as possible.³ The Ministry asked Philip Rappaport to draw up a plan and in March, the head of the Building Industries Section of the US administration, R.C.Henry, met Rappaport to discuss his proposals.⁴ Henry suggested some alterations including an ambitious programme of pre-fabricated wooden houses to be built in the timber yards of the US Zone and transported to the Ruhr.⁵ These were incorporated into a firmer version of the SVR programme drawn up a couple of days later. Manpower Division officials gave it a cautious welcome at a meeting on March

¹ WWA S22(OMGUS), Manpower 7/43-1/47, George S.Wheeler to Director, Manpower Division, Recruiting of workers for the Ruhr, 24.3.1947.

² See p.165 above.

³ HStad NW53, 465, Translation of a Memo from Bate, Chief of Land Manpower Department NRW to WAM, 24.2.1947.

⁴ BAK Z40, 451, Minutes of meeting in Essen on 13.3.1947, 13.3.1947.

⁵ HStad NW10, 91, Report on meetings concerning finance for new construction of miners' housing, 30.7.1947, section III: 'Lieferung von Fertighäusern'.

24th, but it was clear from their response that the proposal, which in many ways was rather a theoretical exercise, was very far from becoming active policy. One would be hard placed to find a more cautious statement than: 'In principle, the British officers are of the opinion that it may be correct to set up such an extensive programme, even if they have considerable doubts regarding its execution (as have the German agencies also).'¹

At the same time as these discussions were in progress, the Bipartite Economic Panel was still actively considering reducing the amount of coal for building supplies (among other secondary industries) in order to boost exports.² The Rappaport plan seemed destined to end up on that great unused pile of Worthy Memos on the Ruhr housing question. Fate decreed otherwise in the form of a piece of political brinkmanship by the OMGUS manpower administration. In effect, the miners' housing programme, like the Points System, was set in motion not by a carefully considered decision about resource allocation but by short-term political pressures which resulted in a complete reorientation of the established system of priorities.

What happened in this case was that ever since Clay had agreed in January to supply 55,000 US Zone workers to the Ruhr, the OMGUS Manpower Division had been growing increasingly restive at the Ruhr housing situation.³ Finally, in exasperation at what he saw as lack of acknowledgement of the housing problem, George Wheeler, chief of the Labour Allocation Branch, authorised a press release stating that recruitment 'has had to be curtailed, despite the

¹ BAK Z40, 451, Translation No.285, 'Discussion regarding the Housing Programme 'Ruhr 1947/1948' on 24th March 1947'.

² WWA S22(OMGUS), Manpower 7/43-1/47, OMGUS Public Relations Office, Communiqué for joint Anglo-American release, 31.3.1947.

³ WWA S22(OMGUS), Manpower 7/43-1/47, Leo R. Werts, Memo for Chief, Wages and Labour Standards Branch, Subject: Housing in the Ruhr, 21.2.1947; T.A.Veenstra, Manpower Allocation Branch to Director, Manpower Division, Subject: Recruitment program for coal miners, 1.3.1947.

continued coal shortage, because of shortage of housing materials'.¹ This was not strictly accurate, because by that time the housing requisitioning programme had created a surplus of some 2,000 - 3,000 places for miners in the Ruhr.² But in reality it was true that all attempts to bring in labour from outside the Ruhr and particularly the American programme were running at a very slow pace because of the accommodation shortages. Had US Zone labour been travelling northward at the rate it was supposed to, available billets in the Ruhr would have been exhausted in a couple of weeks.³

This press release had an immediate effect. As soon as he learned of it, the director of the US Economics Division contacted his British counterparts to apologise for any damage to the recruitment drive. General Clay, at that point at the four-power conference in Moscow, sent an angry telegram pointing out that Wheeler's communiqué was 'absolutely inconsistent with our drive; it is a unilateral action completely at variance with our Bizonal Economic Agreement'.⁴ Clay instructed staff to take 'immediate steps in every possible way to correct damage and to put new vigour in recruiting programme..'.⁵ The deputy director of Manpower Division noted after Clay's telegram that 'things have been pretty hot round here ever since'.⁶ A meeting was hurriedly organised in the Ruhr between the Americans Leo Werts (director of OMGUS Manpower

¹ WWA S22(OMGUS), OMGUS Public Relations Office, For Information of Correspondents, Berlin 21.3.1947; R.G.Wheatley for Chief Manpower Officer, CCG(BE) to R.G.O., 28.3.1947, Subject: Miners' Accommodation.

² WWA S22(OMGUS), Manpower 7/43-1/47, OMGUS Public Relations Office, Communiqué for joint Anglo-American release, 31.3.1947; 7/44-1/38, Memo, 'Labour Force and recruitment for Ruhr coal miners', 14.6.1947.

³ WWA S22(OMGUS), Manpower 7/43-1/47, OMGUS Public Relations Office, Communiqué for joint Anglo-American release, 31.3.1947.

⁴ WWA S22(OMGUS), 7/43-1/47 Telegram US Military Attaché Moscow, from Clay to Keating, 31.3.1947.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ WWA S22(OMGUS), 7/43-1/47, V.C.Stevens, Acting Director Manpower Division, OMGUS, Memo for Mr.Werts, 1.4.1947.

Division), M.S.Szymczak and R.C.Henry and their British counterparts.¹ Suddenly the SVR programme, from being little more than a theoretical exercise become the object of serious discussion. The Bipartite Economic Control Group convened a working party to look into the SVR's recommendations.²

Rappaport's programme presented a complete solution to the Ruhr miners' housing problem. Within two years, according to the plan, 130,000 members of the established workforce were to be rehoused or have their accommodation repaired while housing was to be found for 100,000 new miners. Through repairs and new construction, a total of 5,243,000 m² additional living space was to be created, almost 4 times the figure envisaged by Manpower Division's five-year programme.³ During the first year, the new plan would require more than three times as many building materials as the five-year programme, in the second year almost five times as many.⁴ The programme had not attempted to make the difficult choice between improving the housing quality of the established men or making space for newcomers: it did both. Apart from the prefabricated houses rather unwillingly introduced on American advice, there were no provisional solutions. Neither Nissen huts nor temporary accommodation were envisaged and, an even more radical departure, all married men amongst the new miners (there seems to have been the assumption that two thirds of the new men would be married) were to receive family accommodation within the two year period. The space allocation allowed per miner - 9 m² for a single miner and 45 m² for a miners' family⁵ - was, while

¹ WWA S22(OMGUS), 7/43-1/47, OMGUS Public Relations Office Communiqué for joint Anglo-American release, 31.3.1947.

² WWA S22(OMGUS), 7/43-1/47, OMGUS Public Relations Office Communiqué for joint Anglo-American release, 3.4.1947.

³ HStAD NW73, 282, Director SVR, Programme for the Erection of Miners' Dwellings 'Ruhr 47/48' (henceforth 'Ruhr 47/48'), p.4; (for German language version see HStAD NW73, 481, Programm für den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau 'Ruhr 1947/1948', 28.3.1947).

⁴ 'Ruhr 47/48', p.5.

⁵ Including hall and kitchen.

certainly not being over-generous, acceptable by normal standards.¹ Thus all Ruhr interests would be satisfied: the housing authorities would not be forced to approve sub-standard dwellings; the established miners would not resentfully look on while newcomers absorbed all the available supplies and the newcomers would not only be found a place to live but would be offered a standard of accommodation which they could not find anywhere else, encouraging them to strike permanent roots in the Ruhr.

The other side to the programme was of course that it would create large inequalities and involve very heavy social and economic costs at a time of general scarcity. At the current level of coal allocation, for instance, the miners' housing programme would absorb half of all building materials in the British Zone.² It would place enormous demands on the available supply of timber. The Bavarians had still not fulfilled their 1946 timber commitment of just 28,000m³ and yet the new plan cheerfully required 112,375 m³ of timber in the first year for repair and reconstruction and a further 180,000 m³ for the first nine months of the pre-fabricated housing programme!³ Over three quarters of construction workers in the Ruhr would have to be directed to miners' housing.⁴ It was far from certain whether this degree of resource concentration could be economically or socially justified.

It was equally uncertain whether, should the necessary priorities and allocations be established, the programme would *even then* be feasible. Peak building performance in the pre-war period had been about 300,000 houses a

¹ Hostels for single miners would have a combined dwelling space of around 300,000 m² or room for approx. 35,000 new miners.

² Based on allocation in first quarter in Collins Papers, Report on Miners' Housing, Enclosure 'B', Appendix B, op.cit.

³ HStad NW73, 282, Minutes of second Meeting of the Working Party on Miners' Housing to the Bipartite Economic Control Group, 14.5.1947.

⁴ HStad NW73,481, Rappaport to WAM, 'Betr.: Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', 22.9.1947.

year for Germany as a whole or roughly 50,000 houses for the North Rhine-Westphalia region; bearing in mind that that had been in an economy without comparable material shortages, with a functioning currency and with fully productive labour, it becomes apparent just how ambitious was the 'Ruhr 47/48' target of 130,000 repairs and 65,000 new houses in two years.¹ Experts in the Ministry of Reconstruction believed that with the best will in the world it was unlikely to be completed in less than five years.²

These weaknesses should not be cast at the feet of the programme's author, Philip Rappaport. He had simply set out to show what would be required, were satisfactory housing for all miners within two years to be accepted as a general target. Perhaps the plan outline was not quite explicit enough on the difficulties that stood in the way of its realisation. Rappaport, as the report itself makes clear, was keen for the SVR to remain in charge of any plan. In particular, he wished to avoid the NGCC or some similar economic authority taking charge which, he believed, might lead to housing that was undesirable in architectonic and social political terms. To that extent, he was perhaps overanxious to play down the problems and it was only later that he would distance himself much more vigorously from the plan.³

Whatever Rappaport's culpability, the fact is that the plan received a series of endorsements from the bipartite economic authorities. On 28 March the final plan was submitted and three days later, COPROD called on the Bipartite Economic Control Group (BECG) to set up a working party to investigate its feasibility.⁴ On 18 April, the working party submitted an interim report to the

¹ HStAD NW10, 91, Unsigned Memo from WAM, 'Zur Frage des Ruhr-Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaues', 19.5.1947.

² Ibid.

³ HStAD NW73, 481, Rappaport to WAM, 'Betr.: Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', 22.9.1947.

⁴ HStAD NW73, 282, Minutes of second Meeting of the Working Party on Miners' Housing to the Bipartite Economic Control Group, 14.5.1947.

BECG, supporting the plan and suggesting that the coal allocation of 28,000t be made mandatory.¹ The BECG and its senior sister in the bipartite administration, the Bipartite Economic Panel both endorsed the report. Though it hesitated to introduce a mandatory coal requirement (in order not to reduce unnecessarily the flexibility of the coal allocation machinery), the Bipartite Economic Panel nevertheless called for 'strong pressure' to be exerted on the Executive Committee for Economics (Verwaltungsamt für Wirtschaft), the bizonal German body now responsible for coal allocation, to ensure that the housing programme received the necessary coal and also preferential treatment in respect of timber and glass.²

A summer of discontent

It might be expected that endorsement from the highest economic authorities within Military Government would suffice to ensure the plan's implementation. There was, however, strong resistance to the recommendations from the Verwaltungsamt and its successor, the Verwaltung für Wirtschaft (VfW),³ with the result that, until July, monthly coal allocations to the building programme were only about half the recommended levels.⁴ In addition, the VfW was very reluctant to allot wood to miners' housing in anything like the amounts required, so that in June the BECG working party felt obliged, once again, to

¹ PRO FO 1005, 380, COPROD P(47) 21, Interim Report and Recommendations of working party on Miners' Housing to Bipartite Economic Control Group, 18.4.1947.

² WWA S22(OMGUS), BICO BIECO Series 17/8203/12 - 1947, Minutes of the 14th Meeting of the Bipartite Economic Panel, BIECO/M(47)12, 14.5.1947.

³ Except where it is necessary to do so, the following account does not distinguish between Verwaltungsamt für Wirtschaft and Verwaltung für Wirtschaft and the abbreviation VfW is used throughout. The Verwaltungsamt came into being in September 1946 with the creation of the bizonal area. The change in name in May 1947 was part of a general restructuring of bizonal institutions. The Wirtschaftsrat was created and a new 'Exekutiv Ausschuss' acted as the link between Wirtschaftsrat and the individual administrations.

⁴ 13,300t in May, June and July. See HStad NW53, 465, HQNGCC, Mines Supplies Department, Translation of minutes of 3rd meeting of BECG working party, 4.6.1947.

stress that the miners' housing wood contingent should be given top priority.¹

It would go beyond the limits of this study to attempt a national cost-benefit analysis and establish whether the VfW's resistance was justified. But when it is borne in mind that for the whole of the bizonal area, only 160,000t of coal a month were available for building requirements, and that this had to cover all industrial reconstruction, transport repairs and private building, it is easy to understand why the VfW was very hesitant to provide the mines with a quota of 28,000t.²

What distinguished 'Ruhr 47/48' from the Points System, was that the former impinged far more directly on established economic priorities, whereas the Points System could be met largely at the cost of private consumption. The social cost of the Points System was high, but the impact on economic reconstruction was limited mainly to the loss of worker productivity caused by their actual or relative deprivation in terms of foodstuffs and consumer goods. Housing was different. Even those VfW officials who were advocates of special measures for the miners argued that it was virtually impossible with the available coal to provide for a special miners' building programme³ As far as wood is concerned it was apparent to the VfW that many recognised priority consumers would have to be neglected if the 'Ruhr 47/48' plan were to be honoured in full.⁴

The VfW's resistance to this level of favouritism will have been strengthened by

¹ HStAD NW10, 91, President of the ZAA to WAM, 30.9.1947; HStAD NW53, 465. HQNGCC, Mines Supplies Department, Translation of minutes of 3rd meeting of BECC working party, 4.6.1947.

² For the British Zone on its own, the monthly coal allocation was approximately 100,000t, of which the miners' programme would have swallowed more than a quarter. Collins Papers, Report on Miners' Housing, enclosure 'B', Appendices 'A' & 'B'. op.cit.

³ HStAD NW73, 458, VfW, Arbeitsgruppe Kohle, to WAM, 26.4.1947, signed Deissmann.

⁴ HStAD NW10, 91, President of the ZAA to WAM, 30.9.1947.

the knowledge that the 'Ruhr 47/48' plan went far beyond the minimum requirements necessary for housing new labour and was an optimum plan, in which few corners had been cut. The VfW might well argue that it made no economic sense to treat mining as though supply conditions had normalised, while the rest of the economy was desperately short of coal and wood. Under these circumstances, the 13,300t allocated by the VfW was probably much nearer an appropriate figure than the 28,000t of the Rappaport's plan.

Why were the perceptions of the VfW and the bipartite economic authorities so divergent? One reason must be that the latter were continually under pressure to increase coal exports, whereas the VfW regarded the high level of underpriced coal transfer to overseas countries as a major hindrance to reconstruction. The VfW had no interest in delaying the rest of the reconstruction in order to maximise coal output that would only partly benefit the nation's economy.¹ To a certain extent, then, both sides were making rational economic decisions within their own different frames of reference. Yet it is doubtful whether the bipartite bodies had fully considered the implications of the allocations they demanded. Under pressure to do something fast for miners' housing, it had taken only a couple of meetings for Rappaport's policy to be approved. Probably, the communication gap between the German administration that had produced the housing plan and the Allied administration that approved it inhibited recognition of the enormous concentration of resources and energy and the cost to the rest of the economy that the plan would involve.

It might be countered that, given the bureaucratic inertia of a controlled economy, it made sense for Military Government to demand the impossible in order to attain 'the possible'. Yet there is ample evidence that the bipartite agencies remained for many months under the impression that the full plan

¹ Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland*, p.143.

could be achieved.¹ In addition, the exaggerated demands proved counter-productive because in the long-term they strengthened the resistance to giving miners' housing priority and because the battles over the allocation diverted attention from ensuring the efficient deployment of those resources that were allocated.

The importance of the latter point becomes apparent if the repair figures for the first half of 1947 are considered. As already noted, the first three months of 1947 had seen building supplies to miners' housing fall to an all time low. Repairs fell to between 1,450 and 1,850 d.u.'s a month.² In the second quarter of 1947, the Vfw increased the coal contingent by almost 13 times³ over the levels actually received in the first quarter. Yet the repairs' completion rate rose only to 7.700 for the quarter or around 2,550 d.u.'s a month.⁴ That this did not manifest simply a delay between making a coal allocation and seeing its impact on repairs, was proven when in July and August repairs' progressed even more slowly; in August, normally the peak building month of the year, the completion rate was virtually as low as it had been at any time since the capitulation.⁵

This strikingly weak performance initially went unnoticed by the Allied authorities, who were more concerned at the Vfw's unwillingness to implement the full agreed allocations. That concern increased when it appeared that the successful room requisitioning programme was beginning to exhaust the

¹ HStAD NW73, 481, Rappaport to WAM, 22.9.1947; Collins Papers. Loose Paper. Report on Miners' Housing, Enclosure 'A', op.cit.

² HStAD NW9, 112, SVR, First Aid Housing Repairs Ruhr area, reports for North-Rhine and Westphalia, Feb-March 1947 .

³ 13,300t is of course *more* than thirteen times 1,000t but the former figure included the allocation for the small Cologne and Aachen coal fields as well.

⁴ HStAD NW9, 112, WAM, Ref. 01/314 - Bo/N., Memo, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau - Wohnraumzugang.', 21.1.1948.

⁵ *Ibid.*

available supplies of private dwelling space.¹ Just as significant was the growing seriousness of the labour supply situation in North-Rhine Westphalia, where the Ruhr mining industry's reliance on local recruits was denuding other key industries of able-bodied men.² In June, the Chiefs of the British and U.S. Manpower Divisions visited the Ruhr and subsequently requested the bipartite economic authorities to make the 28,000t of coal a mandatory requirement.³ The BECG acceded to this request and the VfW was thus at last obliged to comply. Top level endorsement of this mandatory top priority was given by the 'Washington Coal Conference'.⁴ The conference also called for the BECG working party into miners' housing to be made into a permanent committee, in order to ensure that the programme was carried out.⁵

The full 28,000t of coal was allotted to miners' housing for the first time in August and continued to be awarded more or less in full until December.⁶ According to British experts, 60 percent of available building materials in the British Zone was being injected into miners' housing.⁷ Yet the amazing fact is that the progress of repairs actually fell (see table 6). Even more disastrous was the failure of the prefabricated and new housing programme. In the first year, according to the plan 15,000 pre-fabs were to be delivered. By January 1948, just 22 had been delivered and six more called forward.⁸ Overall, the first year

¹ Collins Papers, Report on Miners' Housing, Enclosure 'A', op.cit.

² PRO FO 1005, 380, COPROD P(47)34, Note by Chiefs of British and U.S. Manpower Divisions on a recent visit to British Zone, June 1947.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See chapter 3, p.149 and WWA S22(OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/103-2/22, BICO Coal Committee (COCOM), Minutes of the first meeting of the Coal Committee, 15.12.1947, Annex: BIB/P(47) 112/1, 'Implementation of the report on Anglo-American talks on Ruhr coal production'; 'Recommendations of the Washington talks', annex: 'Mine Workers' Housing. Report of the Working Party'.

⁵ The new committee was known as the 'Standing Committee on Ruhr Miners' Housing' and met for the first time on 20.8.1947. See BAK Z40, 449, BECG, Minutes of first meeting of the Standing Committee on Ruhr Miners' Housing, 25.8.1947.

⁶ HStad NW53, 465, Minutes of Meeting held on 15.1.1948, January 1948.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ HStad 9, 56, Land Manpower Department, NRW to Ruhr, WAM, 29.1.1948.

of the programme created 200,000 m² of dwelling space, or less than 4 percent of the two year target.

Table 6: Repairs to Ruhr miners' housing 1947¹

<u>Month</u>	<u>Repairs</u>
June	2,561
July	2,044
August	1,661
September	1,816
October	1,502
November	2,097
December	2,088

Trying to find wood in the bureaucratic jungle

The coal contingent might have been made mandatory, but the German authorities' resistance to the plan continued to hinder progress, particularly in supplies of timber. Neither with respect to timber nor other ancillary materials did the same mandatory priority apply. The result was that the VfW simply maintained its resistance to the 'Ruhr 47/48' programme in these allocations and refused to give miners' housing any greater priority 'wegen der berechtigten Anträge anderer Bedarfsträger'.² Indeed, as the importance of the coal bottleneck receded in comparison with other shortages (such as transport), the VfW's resolve only hardened. As Dr. Keiser wrote to Rappaport in November, 'Wichtiger als neue Anlegungen zu forcieren, scheint mir dafür zu sorgen, daß die Reichsbahn in der Lage ist, Kohle zu transportieren, und daß die Wirtschaft in den Stand gesetzt wird, sie entsprechend sinnvoll aufzunehmen'.³ In consequence, Ruhr repairs and particularly the pre-fabs programme suffered from an acute shortage of wood and other supplementary materials.

¹ HStAD NW9, 112, WAM, Ref. 01/314 - Bo/N., Memo, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau - Wohnraumzugang', 21.1.1948.

² HStAD NW73, 47, Dr. Keiser, VfW, to ZAA, 'Betr.: Vorrangbelieferung des Holzkontingents für den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', 9.12.1947.

³ HStAD NW73, 47, Dr. Keiser, VfW, to Rappaport, 12.11.1947.

Why was the VfW successful in its opposition here where it had failed on the coal contingent? For one thing the VfW's stance was strengthened by the resistance of the Southern Länder that would be supplying most of the wood.¹ Disinclined to do NRW favours at any time, they grew increasingly hostile to what they saw as the inordinate demands of the housing programme.² It is hard to say whether it was the Southern Länder that induced the VfW to reduce allocations to the Ruhr or whether the latter skillfully fanned the flames of Southern opposition as a counterweight to the bipartite muscle backing up the 'Ruhr 47/48' programme. There is evidence for both points of view.³ Even then, a clearer priority on wood might have emerged had not various elements within Military Government itself begun to have doubts about the advisability of the 'Ruhr 47/48' plan. Most significant, perhaps, was the endorsement given by the US building trades' chief and original proponent of the pre-fabs programme, Henry, to the Southern Länder's resistance to the demands.⁴ In January 1948, the NRW authorities mournfully resigned themselves to the fact that 'Die gestellten Anträge an die Besatzungsmacht zum Zwecke der Festlegung einer Priorität auch für den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau sind...noch nicht genehmigt worden; es bestehe auch wohl keine Hoffnung darauf.'⁵

Many projects for which the bricks and stone were available were held up by the absence of ancillary materials. The director of the SVR reported in September 1947 that electrical materials were in such short supply that not even the small

¹ HStad 10, 91, President of the ZAA to WAM, 20.9.1947.

² HStad NW73, 47, WAM, Ref. IIIA - 150/1, Memo, 29.1.1948, signed Baerlecken.

³ In October 1947, for example, when the VfW wrote to the BECG complaining that the housing programme was being treated as official policy without ever having been properly presented to the VfW for examination, it did not omit to send a copy of the letter to the southern Länder. As the WAM angrily noted, '(der) Brief... hat bei den anderen Ländern den Eindruck einer Mißwirtschaft erweckt.' HStad NW73, 282, WAM to VfW, 26.11.1947. The same letter contained further evidence that the VfW had actively discouraged deliveries to the housing programme.

⁴ HStad 10, 91, President of the ZAA to WAM, 20.9.1947, 'Betr.: Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau'.

⁵ HStad NW81, 555, WAM, Memo, 29.1.1948.

supply of Nissen huts had been put in order.¹ Only a fraction of the roof tiles needed had been supplied. In the financial year 1947 the repairs and new construction (excluding the pre-fabs) required some 58,849 m³ of wood. Yet up till the beginning of October 1947, only 4,400 m³ had been delivered and over the year as a whole, only about one sixth of wood ordered actually arrived.² The British Manpower Department in NRW reported that, 'We have now all around us partially completed jobs'.³ 'Ideally', continued the report, 'this job would be staged as a "major operation" and catered for as such in regard to every aspect'. As it was, every single item - coal, wood, labour, transport and so on - was covered by different priorities and conditions.⁴

Building, barter and the black economy

Apart from the feeling that the plan figures were inappropriate for the national economy, what strengthened Henry's opposition and contributed to the VFW's resolve were two key weaknesses in the miners' programme. One, whose effects in the first months of the programme have already been noted, was the enormous wastage and inefficiency that characterised it from its inception. The fact that there were fewer repairs in August 1947 than there had been in February though the coal allocation had in the meantime increased by a factor of at least 10, was evidence that a huge amount of coal earmarked for miners' housing was seeping into other building projects - and indeed other economic sectors in NRW.

All observers in the Ruhr talked of an enormous black economy in the building

¹ HStad NW 73, 481, Rappaport to WAM, 22.9.1947.

² *Ibid.* & HStad NW73, 47, Copy of minutes of meeting in Frankfurt at the VFW on 22.1.1948, 26.1.1948.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS) BICO BISEC 11/107-2/1-4, HQ NRW Land Manpower Dept. to Joint Chairmen, UK/USCCG, 16.4.1948.

⁴ *Ibid.*

sector. The British Officer responsible for the administrative district of Arnsberg, into which fell a substantial portion of the eastern Ruhr area as well as some more rural parts of NRW, reported in May 1947 that the 'German administration seems to have completely failed to direct building materials to the places where they are wanted. Everywhere I go in this *Regierungsbezirk* I see building going on except in the Ruhr areas...Unless something is done to stop this tremendous leakage of building materials to the Black Market, I do not think we shall ever get enough houses built for the miners.'¹ By August 1947, the same observer noted that 'the lamentable failure of the German Administration to take adequate steps to house the miners in the Ruhr area becomes more obvious every day'. After estimating that 75 percent of building materials were going on to the Black Market, he reported that 'All (underlining in original, MR) mining *Kreise* say that repairs for miners' housing are practically at a standstill owing to lack of building material and labour', a fact which he attributed to an 'incompetent and corrupt German administration', and to low fines for illegal building.'²

The exasperation was genuine and understandable but the explanation was an oversimplification. Some of the problems had little to do with either corruption or incompetence and more with the inherent weakness of a controlled economy. For example, the firms responsible for transporting the building materials often demanded to be paid in kind, receiving sometimes as much as four fifths of the contingent!³

An even more fundamental problem, as Werner Plumpe has shown recently, was

¹ PRO FO 1005, 1603, HQ Military Government, *Regierungsbezirk Arnsberg*, Monthly Report for May 1947.

² PRO FO 1005, 1603, HQ Military Government, *Regierungsbezirk Arnsberg*, Monthly Report for August 1947.

³ HStAD NW53, 465, Minutes of meeting held on 15.1.1948 to discuss building materials for miners' housing, January 1948.

the weakness of the regional administration.¹ British authorities in NRW acknowledged that it was 'administratively impossible' for the Housing Ministry rigidly to control the *Kreise*.² Such inspectorates as did exist were hampered by shortages of personnel, transport and paper.³ Even more important than objective resource shortages were the vested interests, particularly NRW industrialists and chambers of commerce, which had been able to prevent the Economics Ministry from setting up an effective administration.⁴ As a result, the authorities were simply not in a position to ensure that the allotted coal really did produce building supplies, that the supplies really did reach the miners' housing programme or that the programme's repairs really did benefit miners.⁵ When a special commission was set up to investigate the problems in the Ruhr, both German and British participants discovered that it was virtually impossible to obtain a clear picture of the size of coal transports to the building industry, about the level of building materials production or about the amount of materials made available to miners' housing projects. The Economics Ministry's reports were completely inadequate.⁶

Partly because of this weakness, there was a willingness from the WAM downwards to accept a considerable amount of losses to the black market. Though everyone knew of the miners' importance, few believed that the coal production programme was for German benefit alone, so that many officials

¹ Werner Plumpe, 'Auf dem Weg in die Marktwirtschaft: Organisierte Industrieinteressen, Wirtschaftsverwaltung und Besatzungsmacht in Nordrhein-Westfalen 1945-1947', in G.Brunn (ed.), *Nordrhein-Westfalen und seine Anfänge nach 1945/1946*, Essen 1986, pp.67-84.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS) BICO BISEC 11/107-2/1-4, HQ NRW Land Manpower Dept. to Joint Chairmen, UK/USCCG, 16.4.1948.

³ *Ibid* & HStAD NW9,55, WAM to HQ Military Government, NRW, 'Betr.: Unterkünfte für Bergleute', 13.3.1947.

⁴ Plumpe, 'Auf dem Weg', p.173ff.

⁵ HStAD NW73, 47, Baerlecken to Paul, 'Betr.: Baustoffe für den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', 13.1.1948.

⁶ *Ibid*.

were not completely persuaded of the housing programme's virtues. To add to their readiness to turn a blind eye, the seepage on to the black market benefited both general population and NRW economy. At the first meeting of the BECG's Standing Committee on Ruhr Miners' Housing in August 1947, at which German officials were in attendance, the bipartite authorities stressed the need for vigorous action to eradicate illegal building. It was noteworthy that the NRW Reconstruction Minister pointed out not only that it was very difficult to combat such 'black building' but also defended it with the comment that it was not only the miners who needed housing. Not surprisingly, he received a very firm reminder of the economic reasons for giving the miners priority.¹

It was at the municipal level that the resistance to giving the mines priority was clearest. Municipal housing offices frequently allotted houses constructed in the 'Ruhr 47/48' programme to non-miners.² It is a plausible assumption that a lot of the misallocations at municipal level were deliberate. A regional official charged with checking municipal housing allocation procedures noted with barely concealed disbelief that the Dortmund housing administration had 'bis August 1947 angeblich nicht gewußt, daß aus dem Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm nur für Bergarbeiter vorgesehene Wohnungen versorgt werden konnten'.³ Yet, because of its lack of administrative clout, the NRW regional administration could do little about this even when it wanted to.

The British were well aware of the problem yet in housing as in other areas of resource control⁴ proved unable to achieve the radical restructuring required. In July 1947, at a meeting of the BECG working party on miners housing,

¹ BAK Z40, 449, BECG, Minutes of first meeting of the Standing Committee on Ruhr Miners' Housing, 25.8.1947.

² HStad NW9, 56, WBSR to WAM, 5.2.1948 and annex.

³ HStad NW9, 57, WAM, Dept IIIB 3 - 150/3 - (12). 'Prüfungsbericht über die Durchführung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramms in der Stadt Dortmund'. 14.5.1948.

⁴ Plumpe, 'Auf dem Weg', p.173ff.

questions from R.C.Henry about controlling coal allocations resulted in an embarrassed silence,¹ presumably because the British did not feel in a position to introduce a more rigorous control of the German administration. In autumn 1947 the wastage was so catastrophic that the pressure for a thorough investigation could not be resisted. Yet despite a special Coordinating Committee investigation,² despite six weeks of investigations and some very tough talking³ enormous losses continued.

One other source of inefficiency worth noting is the low productivity of construction workers. Often poorly housed, underequipped and underfed, construction gangs were working at only a third of pre-war productivity.⁴ Consideration was given to the idea of an incentive scheme for the construction workers, but the idea was rejected because of the negative impact it would have on other sections of labour. In reality, this was a problem that could not be solved until more food was available and enough goods could be purchased to give wages real value.⁵

The spectre of finance

Alongside the enormous wastage, the other feature of the housing programme which raised hackles in Frankfurt was that the question of its financing was never resolved. It is clear from the records that Henry's decision to back the US Zone Länder's resistance came just after the full extent of the finance problem

¹ HStad NW73, 259, WAM, Dept. III B1, Memo, 9.7.1947, 'Bezug: Besprechung des Bp. B. von 9.7.1947 in Essen, Villa Hügel'. The notes are marked by a confusion on the part of the Germans between Hembry, the financial expert of the NGCC, and Henry. The latter appears in the notes as 'der amerikanische Vertreter, Mr.Hembry'.

² HStad NW9, 112, Minutes of the 25th Meeting of the Coordinating Committee, 27.11.1947.

³ HStad NW53, 465, Minutes of meeting on 15.1.1948 to discuss building materials for miners' housing, January 1948.

⁴ HStad NW53, 643, WAM to Ministerpräsident, 4.3.1948.

⁵ BAK Z13, 198, VFW to Verwaltungsrat, 15.5.1948.

had become clear.¹ The Vfw, too, used uncertainties about funding as one of its arguments against a greater concentration of material resources on the Ruhr.

At first sight it is strange that finance should have been a problem at all. In a planned economy, money could be expected to have little significance, serving merely as a sort of supplementary coupon establishing the right of the recipient to obtain goods. Yet in respect of finance, the economy in the Occupation period revealed itself to be not a planned economy at all. Finance had not been centralised in the same way as the allocation of material resources and money led an independent existence. As Theo Horstmann has written, the 'Reichsmark hatte zwar ihre Funktion als ausschließliches Tauschmittel für wichtige Bereiche des Güter- und Leistungserwerbs schon seit längerer Zeit verloren, aber der Besitz einer Bezugsberechtigung allein war zweifellos nur eine notwendige, doch keinesfalls hinreichende Bedingung für einen Kauf: Das zu erwerbende Gut mußte auch bezahlt werden - mit knappem Geld!'.²

In the case of the miners' housing programme, bizonal supplies were being allocated to the mines but no provision had been made for a flow of bizonal funds to go to the Ruhr in order that the supplies might be paid for. Coal and wood allocations were made at bizonal level but housing was generally a matter for the individual Länder and not normally a charge on the bizonal budget.³ Moreover, the Land's responsibility was not that clear cut either. In particular, it was not clear what its obligations were vis à vis privately owned housing. In the British Zone, the Länder and municipalities were committed to provide money for repairs, yet at a rate which did not in fact cover the full cost. For new

¹ HStAD NW73, 458, Translation, BECG, Minutes of 3rd meeting of Standing Committee, 19.9.1947.

² Theo Horstmann, 'Die Angst vor dem finanziellen Kollaps. Banken- und Kreditpolitik in der britischen Zone zwischen 1945 und 1948', in Petzina and Euchner (eds.), *Wirtschaftspolitik*, p.215-234, here p.220.

³ See p.169, text and footnote 3.

construction, there was no clear-cut financing arrangement.¹

Even so, it is hard to see why finance should have been a problem when it is born in mind that goods were so much scarcer than money. In the pre-1948 economy, it rarely happened that consumers lucky enough to receive an allocation of supplies were not in a position to pay. So why was it that as early as September 1947 the whole issue of finance loomed so large that Rappaport saw it as 'die wichtigste aller Fragen im Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau'?² Surely NRW could have advanced enough money to keep the programme going for quite a while? Failing that, could the Länder not have put up the money?

Indeed they could. The finance question became critical long *before* cash reserves ran out. By March 1948, less than half the money set aside for miners' housing by the NRW Reconstruction Minister, for instance, had been spent.³ In other words, the financial problem was *not* a question of lack of money.

The point was that no one wanted to set a precedent. The overall volume of miners' housing was so large that no one wanted to be saddled with the *eventual* bill. The cost of the envisaged new construction, for example, were it ever to be realised in its entirety, was getting on for ten times the entire NRW budget for new housing.⁴ For the other Länder there was an additional fear. The Bavarian representative in the Exekutivrat wrote in December 1947 that:⁵

Die Leistung von Zuschüssen zum Bau von Bergarbeiterwohnungen im

¹ HStad NW10, 91, President of the ZAA to WAM, 11.10.1947; BBA 32, 1064. Hibernia report, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau 1945-1948', February 1949.

² HStad NW53, 643, WAM to personal assistant of the Minister President, 4.3.1948; HStad NW73, 481, Rapport to WAM, 22.9.1947.

³ HStad NW53, 643, WAM to personal assistant of the Minister President, 4.3.1948.

⁴ NRW budget allocation for new housing in 1947 was 45 million RM, of which 30 million were allocated to miners' housing. The cost of the first years' new construction in the Rappaport plan was 386 million RM. See HStad NW10, 91, President of the ZAA to WAM, 11.10.1947 & WAM to ZAA, 17.10.1947.

⁵ *Akten zur Vorgeschichte der BRD 1945 - 1949, Band 4 Januar - Dezember 1948*, Munich 1983, p.185.

Ruhrgebiet durch die Bizone oder deren Länder müßte auch unter dem Gesichtspunkt Bedenken auslösen, daß sie wohl der erste Schritt zur Einbeziehung der süddeutschen Länder in die Subventionierung des Ruhrkohlenbergbaus wäre.

Apart from the sheer size of the potential sums involved, the other source of anxiety was that, by contrast with material allocations (which were seen as being short-term expedients), financial allocations were viewed as having long-term implications. Conscious that a currency reform would at some point reestablish the real value of money, every group wanted to ensure that it was not left holding the baby. This explains, for example, the hostility of the NRW Finance Minister to the idea of even a modest housing programme financed solely by NRW. The Land would not accept sole responsibility for a task that was in the interest 'des gesamten deutschen Volkes' and it would not finance the rebuilding of housing owned by the mines.¹ Neither NRW nor the other Länder were prepared to settle their difference for the sake of the benefits to the national economy. Indeed Bavaria, the most particularist of the all the Länder, went so far as to assert that the advantages would accrue only to NRW!²

Why did Military Government not settle the issue? It could either have forced the Germans at bizonal level to commit funds or it could have provided money directly through its control of the mines. Let us start with the second option first which seemed not illogical since a large proportion of miners' housing was colliery owned. (The rest belonged to *gemeinnützige Wohnungsgesellschaften*, private housing associations few of whom had sufficient funds for new building in the immediate post-war era.) During 1946, most building work in fact had been financed by the mines, although on the understanding that at least a proportion of their outlay would be reimbursed by the state under the general Zonal arrangements for financing repairs. In 1947, too, the financing of

¹ See HStAD NW10, 91. WAM, 'Bericht über die Besprechungen betr. Finanzierung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsneubaus', 30.7.1947; WAM, 'Besprechungsnotiz', 19.9.1947.

² *Akten zur Vorgeschichte. Band 4, p.183ff.*

repairs looked relatively secure.

The real problem was the large volume of new construction envisaged by the housing programme. Here, as has been noted, the Land was not bound to make any contribution. At first, it looked as if, despite all the regional government's reluctance, a *modus vivendi* might be found whereby the Land and the mines would each provide half of those costs that could not be raised by normal credits on the capital market. NRW agreed to put up 30 million RM and the NGCC promised funds, a position that was confirmed at a series of meetings in June.¹ These figures were well short of the programme's requirements but they were easily sufficient to meet the volume of construction work likely over the next few months. Both sides were agreed that it was important to sort out the question as soon as possible because the pre-fabs could not be delivered until the NRW housing societies were in a position to put up the money.

At the beginning of July, however, there was a remarkable turnabout in the NGCC's attitude. It was no longer interested in giving financial support and certainly not until the Land had spent all its 30,000,000 RM.² Indirectly, Hembry, the NGCC's financial director, admitted the real reason for the change, namely, that the financial experts in Berlin were growing increasingly anxious about the amount of subsidies that were being pumped into the mines.³ Until June 1947, these subsidies had been given as credits by the Reichsbank, but they were deemed to large to continue in this way and became direct subsidies from the Zonal budget.⁴ The Zonal budget was heavily in debt and the British were very anxious about the financial instability that might ensue. As a result,

¹ HStad NW10, 91, WAM, Report on discussions concerning finance for new construction of miners' housing, 30.7.1947.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Horstmann, 'Die Angst vor dem finanziellen Kollaps', p.222.

Finance Division forbade Hembry to provide any funds for miners' housing.¹

The abrupt change in the NGCC's stance, announced at a meeting on 5 July, surprised all the other participants in the discussion: 'Die Unterhandlung stand in einem überraschenden Gegensatz zu den früheren Verhandlungen und zeigte ein stark zur Schau gestelltes finanzielles Nicht-Interesse der N.G.C.C. an der Durchführung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramms'.² It threw the whole question wide open again. Now that the NGCC had withdrawn its support, all NRW's anxieties about admitting responsibility came to the fore.³ Though the NGCC stated that the Land should spend the 30 million RM and worry about the principles later, the NRW government argued that the fundamental question as to who was responsible for building had to be settled.⁴

By the beginning of September the matter still had not been settled. Unwillingly, the Reconstruction Ministry agreed to consider financing individual cases on their own merits and it was on this basis that the tiny consignment of pre-fabs reached the Ruhr.⁵ At the same time the Land applied to the bizonal administration for a tax on coal which could be used to finance the housing programme.⁶ Here the resistance of the other Länder made itself felt and the proposal made little progress.⁷

If the NGCC could not provide funds, why then did the Allies not put pressure on the bizonal administration to provide the requisite cash? It is possible that, if the NGCC's financial difficulties had emerged early enough, BICO would have

¹ Collins Papers, A2, Paper 5, letter from Hembry to Chief, Fuel and Power Division, CCG(BE), et al, 8.7.1947.

² HStAD NW10, 91, Rappaport to WAM, 5.7.1947.

³ HStAD NW10, 91, WAM, 'Besprechungsnotiz', 19.9.1947.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ HStAD NW10, 91, WAM to President of SVR, 2.9.1947.

⁶ HStAD NW10, 91, Finance Ministry to Hauptverwaltung für Finanzen beim Zweizonen Wirtschaftsrat, 16.9.1947.

⁷ HStAD NW10, 91, WAM to Head of the Press Office, 14.6.1948.

made appropriate arrangements, yet the full extent of the problem became clear only towards the end of the summer. In October the BECG, on the advice of the Standing Committee on Miners' Housing, requested BICO to ensure that finance for the programme was made available.¹ Yet BICO was slow in putting pressure on the German institutions to find a solution,² possibly out of general fears of undermining the slow move towards greater self-determination in economic affairs.

To add to the financial confusion, another difficulty emerged, namely that a lot of the land on which the houses were to be built was owned by the mines and that meant that their tenure was insecure. The future ownership of the mines was undecided and the NGCC was unwilling to agree to land leases (Erbbauverträge) that would have tied the hands of future owners. Without security of land tenure, the housing associations were unwilling to risk their money on building.³

The result of all these difficulties was that the new housing programme limped on at a pace slower even than that allowed by the Vfw's modest allocation of wood. In fact, in January 1948 manufacturers' yards in the US Zone were full of completed fabricated houses which could not be brought into the Ruhr because the property leases obtainable were too short and because payment from the Reconstruction Ministry still had not been settled.⁴ As late as summer 1948, virtually no new construction apart from a small number of pre-fabs had been

¹ HStad NW10,91, Copy of letter from BECG to BICO, 7.10.1947. Since the summer reorganisation of the bipartite organisation, the BECG no longer dealt with the German agencies directly but through BICO.

² HStad NW73, 47, Translated copy of letter from Director of the SVR to SRMO, Essen, 30.1.1948, enclosed with an undated letter from Director of the SVR to WAM.

³ HStad NW10, 92, Treuhandstelle für Bergmannswohnstätten to Director, SVR, 20.2.1948; WAM, Memo for Ministerialdirector Röhl, 11.3.1948.

⁴ HStad NW9, 56, Land Manpower Dept., HQ Land NRW to Röhl, WAM, 29.1.1948.

funded.¹

The point about a lot of these issues, with the exception of the property leases, was that though their impact was palpable enough, they were not genuine problems.² It would not have hurt NRW to commit its 30 million RM in advance, any more than the Länder would have suffered by making an allocation of cash to help finance the new construction. It was the precedent that was at issue. The more imminent the prospect of a currency reform became, the less willing was any party to shoulder the burden.

Revising the plan, October 1947 - spring 1948

Because of wastage and financial shortages, the VfW took the opportunity in September of provisionally cutting by a substantial amount the programme's coal allocation for the first quarter of 1948.³ An amusing incident followed which surely proved, if proof were needed, the impenetrability of the bureaucratic jungle surrounding the housing question. On 21 October, the German participants of the Standing Committee on Ruhr Miners' Housing met to agree on common ground before the full committee met on the 30. It is evident from the minutes that the NRW representatives not only did not know of the VfW's decision but also had not realised that the chief source of opposition to the miners' housing plan was the VfW itself. Rappaport, thinking himself among friends, 'erklärte freimütig, daß das Programm nur zu 40 percent erfüllt werden kann' and admitted that the Allied Standing Committee members were still unaware of this fact.⁴ He declared himself to be against a revision of the

¹ HStAD NW73, 135, Undated minutes of first meeting of DKBL housing committee on 1.7.1948.

² According to Hembry, the NGCC's financial expert, the problem was 'not even secondarily one of finance'. See AG 1948/163/4, A.J.Hillhouse, Report on the Ruhr coal Industry Field Trip, January 1948.

³ HStAD NW73, 47, President of the ZAA to WAM, 22.12.1947.

⁴ HStAD NW73, 282, 'Bericht über die Besprechung am 21.10.1947 über das Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm', 23.10.1947.

programme to a more realistic target, because he felt it was important not to endanger the full coal contingent. This was grist to the VfW's mill and the NRW delegates were suddenly shocked to hear the VfW representative declare 'überraschenderweise und sehr bestimmt' that the coal allocation could under no circumstances be given in full. The absolute maximum was 20,000t a month.¹ A day later, the VfW sent the BECG and the other Länder a letter arguing that the 'Ruhr 47/48' programme could not be fulfilled, had never been properly thought through and indeed had never, with the exception of the coal allocation, been fully authorised by Military Government.²

Now began a fight between the NRW representatives and the VfW over the allocations to the miners' housing programme.³ NRW was hampered in its demand for better allocations by the revelations emerging about the amount of wastage and uncontrolled building in the Ruhr. In January, the newly formed DKBL suggested that it and not the Reconstruction Ministry should handle the coal and materials contingents, a suggestion which only added force to the criticism of existing control and coordination of supplies in NRW.⁴

For its part the VfW came under increasing pressure from Military Government to give the miners' housing programme more support and in January a series of compromises were reached. The coal allocation was brought up to its old level again, and the allocation procedure ('Endverbraucherkontingentierungsverfahren' in German officialese!) was changed, allowing NRW greater

¹ Ibid. The figure of 20,000t was arrived at by taking the original quota of 28,000t and then subtracting the 5,000t for iron production contained therein (because the steel firms now received a coal quota directly) and subtracting a further 3,000t because the pre-fabs programme was much smaller than originally envisaged. HStAD NW73, 135. VfW, Abteilung Planung, Memo, 2.12.1947.

² HStAD NW73, 282, Copy of letter from VfW to BECG, 22.10.1947.

³ HStAD NW73, 282, WAM to VfW, 26.11.1947; HStAD NW73, 47, Director, SVR, to Ministerialdirector Dr. Spiecker, Exekutivrat, 8.1.1948 & WAM to VfW, 12.1.1948; Dr. Kelsner, VfW, to ZAA, 9.12.1947; Director SVR to WAM, 5.1.1948.

⁴ HStAD NW73, 47, Copy of minutes of a meeting at the VfW, Frankfurt on 22.1.1948, 26.1.1948.

flexibility.¹ After a series of tough negotiations, the transport facilities offered to the programme were improved.² Yet Länder and Vfw opposition continued. In April, the Vfw cut the wood contingent for miners' housing by 75 percent, despite the fact that there was still a large backlog from 1947.³ The Länder grew bolder and Bavaria openly declared itself unwilling to honour its commitments.⁴ Notwithstanding attempts by NRW to bypass the official allocation procedure and barter coal for timber, the volume of wood received in the first half of 1948 was actually lower than it had been in 1947.⁵

Thus little improvement was to be seen in the building programme.⁶ True, the pace of repairs was somewhat faster. From February 1948 until July, repairs and new construction proceeded at a rate of about 2,250 dwelling units a month.⁷ In the months leading up to the currency reform (ie April-June 1948), progress was even better; in May for example, almost 2,500 d.u.'s were repaired.⁸ Yet these figures had been achieved only by increasing the share of lightly damaged buildings in the repairs programme.⁹ Such properties yielded little additional living space once repaired so that the nominally faster completion rate was not really a gain at all.

Housing and the regeneration of the labour force

In April 1948, Rappaport felt called upon to defend the achievements of the

¹ BAK Z40,500, ZAA, Memo, ref Ve/3825/48, 1.2.1948.

² HStad NW73, 457, WAM, 'Bericht über den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', 22.6.1948.

³ HStad NW73, 47, Translated copy of letter from Bate to joint chairmen of UK/USCCG, 16.4.1948.

⁴ HStad NW81, 520, Notes of a conversation with Mr. Bate, signed Rappaport, 17.6.1948.

⁵ HStad NW73, 457, WAM, 'Bericht über den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', 22.6.1948; NW81, 520, WAM, Memo concerning visit of Dr. Dach on 28.5.1948, 1.6.1948.

⁶ HStad NW73, 47, SVR, report for May, 11.6.1948.

⁷ Compiled from SVR Aufstellung (1949), op.cit.

⁸ HStad NW73, 479, SVR, Miners' Housing progress report for May 1947.

⁹ Calculated from SVR Aufstellung (1949), op.cit.

housing programme against its critics (and primarily against the DKBL). 'Immerhin dürfte es eine nicht unbeachtliche Leistung sein', he wrote to the Reconstruction Minister, 'wenn trotz aller Schwierigkeiten im Jahre 1947 rd. 23,500 Instandsetzungen im Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau durchgeführt wurden.' 'Tatsächlich', he continued, 'ist es bisher gelungen, den gesamten Zustrom an Bergarbeitern unterzubringen'.¹

The latter assertion was rather misleading. It was true that no one brought into the Ruhr found himself without accommodation, but it was not true that labour supply had been unaffected by the housing shortage. It had limited the number of people from outside the Ruhr and, to a certain extent, the overall size of the recruiting programme. Between August and November first clothing and then accommodation shortages had curtailed recruiting outside the Ruhr. To a certain extent, this limited the pace at which men were taken on, but to a greater degree it induced the authorities to concentrate more than they wanted to on local recruits. It was true that by dint of great efforts and not least of the Coordinating Committee's services, 50 percent of recruits in the second half of 1947 came from outside the Ruhr. This was a considerable achievement but it fell far short of what was necessary to protect other Ruhr industries. In their manpower planning towards the end of 1947, British and German officials calculated that three quarters of new recruits ought to come from outside the Ruhr.² The costs were borne largely by the other Ruhr industries thereby deprived of labour but sometimes by the mines themselves when, as not infrequently happened, the mines' own suppliers were hit by labour shortages.³

In any case a lot of the accommodation offered, probably more than half, was

¹ HStAD NW73, 47, Rappaport to WAM, 9.4.1948. The repairs figure included miners' housing outside the Ruhr.

² 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.58.

³ WWA F35, 494, DKBL, Circular No. V 19, 1.3.1948.

not the result of the building programme at all, but derived from the intensified use of available dwelling space in the Ruhr. In 1947, for example, some 23,192 miners were provided with living space in this way. By contrast the repairs programme over the same period produced at most 9,000 extra rooms in repaired housing with an additional few thousand in repaired or converted hostels, public halls and so forth.¹

A lot of the accommodation offered was temporary, either because of the quality or because the mines would not be able to use it indefinitely. Much of the private accommodation gained through room inspection and requisitioning, for instance, would eventually go back to the free disposal of its former owners. As the housing shortage became more acute, increasingly low quality and provisional accommodation had to be used. The room requisitioning programme made increasing recourse to public halls and other emergency housing. Slow progress in housing repairs induced the authorities to begin a special action 'Lager und Herbergen' in the Summer of 1947, the purpose of which was to convert existing unusable camps and other public buildings into emergency accommodation for new labour. By June 1948 some 6,600 single miners and 400 or so families had been housed in this way.²

The initial goal of offering quality accommodation had thus been abandoned. No new miners families were given proper family accommodation and most married trainees from outside the Ruhr had to leave their families behind them. If they came with, then normally only because there were relatives in the Ruhr with whom they could stay, often in very cramped conditions. In addition, the mines offered a few hundred families emergency housing in camps and so forth.³

¹ HStad NW9, 112, WAM, Dept. IVC (WB), Memo, 12.1.1948 & NW73, 480, Director, SVR, 'Ein Jahr Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau. Bericht über das erste Jahr des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaus im Ruhrgebiet', 31.7.1948.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

And for the single men, though some of the worst billets of 1946 had been removed, much of the accommodation on offer remained extremely primitive.

Going against the grain

Before making a more general summary, it is worth noting that the experiences of the house-building programme found close parallels in the supply of other resources. Food was the most critical problem, of course, and one which has already received detailed analysis by John Farquharson.¹ Farquharson's work reveals that the problems in obtaining food bore many similarities to those of housing and building materials. In food production the coal-cycle was much in evidence, since coal shortages affected the production of fertiliser and farming implements.² The ineffectiveness of controls and the absence of incentives hit deliveries of agricultural produce just as they did the building trade.³ NRW proved to be if anything even more incapable at collecting grain and food than it had been at monitoring the construction industry.⁴ At bizonal level, Land opposition to central controls, particularism and the American tendency to side with the particularists all undermined collection and transfer of both types of resources;⁵ the Bavarians were just as Bolshy about their grain as they were reluctant to hand over their timber.⁶

The uncontrolled economy: a summary

Both this and the previous two chapters have painted a pretty negative picture of the authorities' attempts at harnessing the human and material resources required to regenerate the Ruhr mining labour force. Could the occupying

¹ Farquharson, *The Western Allies*.

² *Ibid.*, p.45ff.

³ *Ibid.*, p.161ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.191.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.149.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.157.

powers have been expected to do better? And would a German government have been more effective?

Any government in Germany would have faced the problem, as indeed every European government did, that resources were extremely tight. Coal and grain, above all, were the elusive masters of European recovery. Shortages of these substances, the basic energy sources for machine and man respectively, formed the dramatic and frightening backcloth against which any reconstruction strategy had to be developed.

On top of these problems, Britain was confronted with enormous commitments overseas. It was in the unenviable position of being a bankrupt imperial power, presiding over an empire that in both political and economic terms had been profoundly affected by the war. Even without the claims of occupied Germany, Britain's resources were overstretched. As well as being mortgaged to the hilt, it had little coal or grain to spare for its friends let alone its former enemies.

These facts necessarily constrained progress in the immediate post-war period and Britain could do nothing about them. Perhaps America, with its potentially enormous grain surplus could have been expected to provide more food for Europe. A more efficient grain export programme before Spring 1948, when large-scale imports finally did begin, might have done much to restore labour's motivation and efficiency.¹ Britain, however, was powerless.

As chapter 2 has already argued, the degree of failure in the 1945-'46 coal drive went far beyond what could be explained by these shortages and exposed major contradictions in the British approach. Both the tightness of resources within Germany and at home and the goal of progressive democratisation encouraged a small staff, a non-coercive presence, considerable delegation of authority and a

¹ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

general approach of not applying policies that would require a police state to enforce. So far so good. But the drive for coal necessitated a completely different line. To get coal, some group somewhere had to make enormous sacrifices: either the labour force would have to be kept behind barbed wire and worked at gunpoint or civilians elsewhere held down near starvation rations so that the miners could enjoy a decent meal or the French forced to wait for the coal they so desperately needed.

This was a most unenviable dilemma that would have confronted any occupying power in the Ruhr. Not so ruthless as the French, not so well off as the Americans, the British were singularly handicapped. No occupying power seems to have been more nervous than they. They were nervous of Allied reaction if exports reduced, nervous of German reaction if more sacrifices were demanded of the Zone. It would be a brave historian, however, who could confidently assert that the British should have depressed civilian rations further or told the French to expect no more coal. The conclusion on the early period must be therefore, that Britain's problems were not due to incompetence, but that because of its specific constellation of interests, ties and anxieties, Britain retarded recovery in a way that other occupying powers or a German government would not have done.

Once they were confident of material and moral support from the Americans, the British found the limited freedom of manoeuvre that was all that was necessary to make a breakthrough in the Ruhr. The importance of that breakthrough should not be understated and the winter of 1946-47 was undoubtedly a turning point in the coal supply. Nevertheless, the coal programme continued to operate with enormous inefficiency.

Part of this was unavoidable. With the exception perhaps of temporary wartime innovations, the fixed-price controlled economy has yet to be invented which is

not characterised by withdrawal of labour and goods from normal channels, a lively black market and poor incentives to productivity and efficiency. A controlled economy is synonymous with wastage. And in the 1945-47 period there was no alternative to such a system. At least until the end of 1947, restoring a free market was out of the question. Shortages were so acute, communications so disrupted and the need to impose economic preferences alien to the Germans themselves (above all support for liberated nations) so obvious that central allocation of resources was inevitable.

Having said that, the unresponsiveness of officials and managers and the failure to tap and divert key resources went far beyond the inherent weaknesses of the controlled economy. In part this was because there continued to be a contradiction between Military Government's (increasingly) indirect rule and the fact that key Anglo-American policies were not supported by the Germans. Above all, the belief that Germany should contribute to the reconstruction of the liberated European countries met with little sympathy in Germany. The British could hardly expect the Germans to give their full backing to a production drive which denied the normal consumer any coal at all and exported considerable amounts to France. It is difficult, nevertheless, to see what the British or Americans could have done about this. Denying their Allies support was as unthinkable as halting the process of devolution within Germany. The Occupying Powers were therefore not being incompetent, but they *were* responsible for inefficiency.

Two further forces contrived to weaken the economic administration in Germany. As we know from Werner Plumpe's work, conservative bureaucrats and industrialists cooperated in preventing, at local and regional level, the establishment of an effective administration. Of possibly even more crucial importance was the fact that at central bizonal level the Länder's particularism, backed by the US, hindered the creation of powerful bizonal bureaucracies.

Neither the *Verwaltung für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten* nor the *Verwaltung für Wirtschaft* were in a position to make the Bavarians hand over their grain or their timber.

Ultimately, the Americans' commitment to free enterprise played a key role in preventing the controlled economy from working more effectively. Apart from the weakness of the Frankfurt bureaucracies, there was the fact that, from 1947 onwards, a currency reform was hanging in the air, thus undermining confidence in present values and encouraging a wait and see attitude. Had the British been able to influence bizonal policy more effectively the bizonal administration might have enjoyed a little more muscle.

Does the experience of mining suggest that the Occupying Powers hindered economic reconstruction? For the 1945-46 period undoubtedly so. Thereafter, there is no doubt that a lot of the inefficiency with which the economy operated was due to their presence and influence. In addition, the continued high volume of underpriced coal exports cost the Germans dearly. On a more general plane, there were many other Allied measures such as partition, denazification and dismantling which, however justified some or most of them were, had a very deleterious impact on economic recovery.

On the other hand, the Allied sense of responsibility for their subject populations meant that considerable and critically needed food resources were imported. Both in general terms and for the coal drive in particular these were of great value. Even more important was the way the Allied presence eased very painful decisions about the transfer of resources. The concentration of scanty food supplies and stocks of consumer goods on the miners, for example, was an essential but deeply distressing measure. Would a German government have carried it out? Probably it would have had to, but at significant political costs. To impose such a decision on the population would very likely have involved a

German government in assuming dictatorial powers and this would certainly have made a later transition to democracy very difficult.

What came to Germany's advantage was the fact that the Allied presence was not obtrusive enough to arouse open opposition but was sufficiently there to provide a scapegoat for German authorities. True, this resulted in considerable inefficiency but at least it allowed decisions to be made without creating bitter conflicts within German society. Painful decisions of the post-war period such as the Points System or that other landmark of resource redistribution, the currency reform, were seen ultimately as Allied policies. German politicians and thus German democracy were able to emerge with their hands clean. Seen in these terms, as the unfortunate by-product of a system which helped steer Germany towards democracy, the inefficiency of the coal drive does not seem so serious.

How did mining fare once the currency reform had been introduced and policy was firmly in German hands? Did the currency reform, the creation of a free market and the emergence of a more unified administration solve mining's shortages and eliminate the problems of supply? It is to this question which we must now turn.

New Miners in the Ruhr
Rebuilding the workforce in the
Ruhr mines, 1945 - 1958

Volume 2 of 2

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD of the University
of Warwick

Centre for the Study of Social History

December 1987

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Chapter 5: An imperfect market. Financing workforce regeneration in the social market economy

1: Weak foundations: house and hostel construction in the 'imperfect market'

The currency reform and the mines

In preparation for the currency reform, April 1948 saw an important alteration in the method of mine financing. Hitherto, the mines had received from the British Zonal budget frequent injections of cash which varied in size according to their operating losses. Now, these payments ceased and were replaced by a new bizonal subsidy given on a fixed per-ton basis.¹ Because the level of subsidy was fixed and not as generously calculated as the earlier ad hoc payments, the mines had to watch their spending very carefully. Before, they had at least been protected from operating losses (though not covered for depreciation); now, careful management was needed to avoid bankruptcy.²

One might have expected that the currency reform would solve this problem since, as is well known, the currency reform in June 1948 saw not just the creation of a new monetary unit, the Deutschmark, but also a thoroughgoing liberalisation of the economy. The neo-liberal philosophy of the VfW's new³ director, Ludwig Erhard, resulted in the rapid dismantling of price controls and rationing. The mines should now have been able to charge German customers a price in line with coal's true worth to the economy and thus to improve their

¹ BAK OMGUS BICO COALCO 17/8188/11, BIB P(48)88, Paper, 'Investment credits for the hard coal mining industry', 21.6.1948.

² WWA S22(OMGUS) BICO BISEC 11/104-2/3, UK/USCCG, Review of Hard Coal Production, 10.6.1948.

³ Erhard took over in March.

financial situation.¹ In fact, however, the domestic coal price remained pegged at well below its real value,² a sign that in the Economics and Finance Departments the free market was not the only household god. It vied for devotion with an even more fickle and awe-inspiring master, namely, price stability. Fear of inflation was probably the biggest single influence on German economic and financial policy in the post-war era. Throughout the 1940's and 1950's, the Federal Government believed itself to be in 'einem schicksalhaften Kampf..die Stabilität in Deutschland zu bewahren und nicht, wie so viele Länder, in eine inflationäre Entwicklung hineinzuschliddern.'³ Because of the multiplier effect, the German authorities felt that the economy was especially vulnerable in respect to coal and there was great reluctance to allow any price increases at all.⁴ Thus mining was effectively excluded from the market economy and its financial problems continued.

One important consequence of the new economic and financial framework was the change in the relationship between the Allies and the mining industry. Hitherto, the UK/USCCG had, through BICO, been able to influence fairly directly the financial and material resources made available to the mines. Now that most rationing had been or was in the process of being dismantled and the mining subsidy was a matter for German decision, the UK/USCCG lost a lot of its ability to shape mining policy. True, it could give the mines instructions as before, but this was in some ways rather meaningless because the Group could no longer ensure that the necessary resources were made available.

¹ The export price remained subject to Allied control, now exercised through the newly created International Ruhr Authority.

² Abelshauser, *Ruhrkohlenbergbau*, p.34.

³ Ludwig Erhard talking to the Unternehmensverband Ruhrbergbau, in Abelshauser, 'Kohle und Marktwirtschaft', p.504.

⁴ *Ibid.* and BAK Z13, 198, VFW to Direktorialkanzlei, 14.3.1949.

Inefficient as it had been, at least bipartite control had involved clear, possibly even exaggerated, recognition of coal's importance and the mines' needs. The question was whether the German authorities would be equally sensitive and would provide by other means the resources coal was prevented from commanding through its price. For there was no doubt that the collieries had huge and pressing investment needs. In the first place they had to modernise plant and equipment. Massive investment was required to sink new shafts, rebuild and modernise installations above ground and mechanise the coal faces. Of greater interest for the present study, however, were the large sums required to build houses and hostels, for on their construction depended both continued workforce expansion and the integration of the existing workforce.

Housing needs in 1948

There was no one in summer 1948 who doubted the need for a rapid house-building programme. According to an official survey, almost half the miners were living in inadequate accommodation.¹ At the end of 1948, there were around 10,000 new miners whose wives and children were still in the former German territories in the east, in the SBZ or in the Western Zones outside NRW;² many more had families in other parts of NRW itself.³ In all, as a DKBL survey at the end of 1949 discovered, 61,000 miners were separated from their families.⁴ It was in recognition of the continuing pressing need for housing that the SVR's new version of its housing programme, produced in March 1948,

¹ Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948, op.cit.

² HStad NW9, 57, WAM, Internal memo from Referat Bergarbeiterunterkunft to Abteilung Wohnraumbewirtschaftung, 5.10.1948.

³ On the arrangements for settling family members of new miners in other parts of NRW, see HStad NW9, 56, WAM to NRW Labour Ministry, 28.12.1948 and subsequent documents.

⁴ HStad NW9, 112, WAM I A3, Memo for Dr. Fuchs, 28.2.1950. This figure included miners working in coalfields other than the Ruhr. However, the great majority were in the Ruhr.

confirmed the housing targets of the original. New in the plan was above all a more realistic time scale; completion was projected for October 1952 rather than the end of 1948 as before.¹

In a number of respects the currency reform made house building more urgent than ever. Miners separated from their families were hard hit by the reform which considerably increased the real cost of paying two rents.² In June 1949, officials in the Reconstruction Ministry detailed the case of a new miner at the Minister Achenbach pit in Lünen. 'Selbst bei bescheidener Lebensweise', noted the officials, '(ist es) kaum möglich..., neben Lagerkosten seinen Haushalt in Neugarstedt zu bestreiten'. Despite the fact that the man had been at the pit for almost a year, he was only 267th on its housing list. Many of the others awaiting housing were in the same difficult position as he.³ For a considerable proportion of the newcomers the costs were too high and the DKBL survey noted above found that some 20 percent of those leaving the mines did so because of accommodation problems.⁴ Even this figure understates the importance of housing, however. Many people for whom accommodation was a problem did not actually cite it as their reason for leaving because the housing situation was bad in all urban areas and the leavers could not expect to find better housing elsewhere - at least, not in areas where there was also employment. The point was that if good housing had been on offer, it was a reasonable assumption that many more than 20 percent of the leavers would have stayed.⁵

¹ HSTAD NW73, 47, Director, SVR, Draft, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm Ruhr 47/52' (the initial designation of the new programme, MR), 30.3.1948; Translated copy of letter from Bate to joint chairmen of UK/USCCG, 16.4.1948; HSTAD NW73, 73, Translated copy of minutes of the Wiederaufbauauschuß für Bergarbeiterwohnungen meeting on 22.4.1948.

² BBA 8,384, Concordia to DKBL, Abt Arbeitseinsatz, 25.2.1949.

³ HSTAD NW9, 56, WAM, Internal memo from Referat Bergarbeiterunterkunft to Gruppe Wohnraumbewirtschaftung, 11.6.1949.

⁴ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-1/39, Combined Coal Control Group (CCCG) report to BICO for April 1949.

⁵ This was certainly the view of the CCCG, see WWA S22 (OMGUS), Manpower 7/50-2/9, Labour Allocation Branch, Weekly report for week ending 18.5.1949.

For refugee miners with families still in the SBZ, the creation of two different currencies in West and East Germany and the increasing problems in conducting financial transactions between the two made it almost impossible to give family and relatives financial support. It was no surprise therefore that August and September 1948 saw an influx of families from the SBZ. Often there was no suitable housing and squalid overcrowding resulted.¹

As well as its direct financial implications, the currency reform also engendered amongst the population a feeling of returning to normal. Many people were now looking for some more permanent place to settle. This provided a challenge but also a great opportunity for mining. If it could provide decent family housing at a time when accommodation was generally in desperately short supply in Germany, it might well create the stable workforce for which it was hoping.

House building and the currency reform

How did the construction programme respond? In one respect the situation was now much more favourable for rapid building. For within a few months of the currency reform the supply problems so characteristic of the preceding era had all but disappeared. By November 1948, the Reconstruction Ministry could report that procurement of most building materials was no longer a problem.² Yet the same report noted that progress was actually slower than before.³ Why?

¹ HStAD NW73, 457, IVB to WAM, 18.8.1948; IVB to Wirtschaftsminister, NRW, 6.8.1948; HStAD NW9, 56, AA Oberhausen to NRW Labour Ministry, 29.10.1948.

² PA 2, 271, WAM to Dr. Hartmann, 15.11.1948, annex: Memo, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau'. It was true that the Reconstruction Ministry nevertheless complained about social housing's difficulties in obtaining building materials and requested the Department of Economics (VfW) to force suppliers to give social housing priority. Not surprisingly, given the determinedly pro-market atmosphere in Frankfurt, the request met with little sympathy and within a short while the difficulties seem to have sorted themselves out. HStAD NW81, 520, WAM III-150/2 (1), Memo, 10.11.1948 and draft of a letter from WAM to Wirtschaftsministerium NRW; OBADA I8010/1238/49, OBAD Lagebericht for 1st quarter 1949.

³ PA 2, 271, WAM to Dr. Hartmann, 15.11.1948.

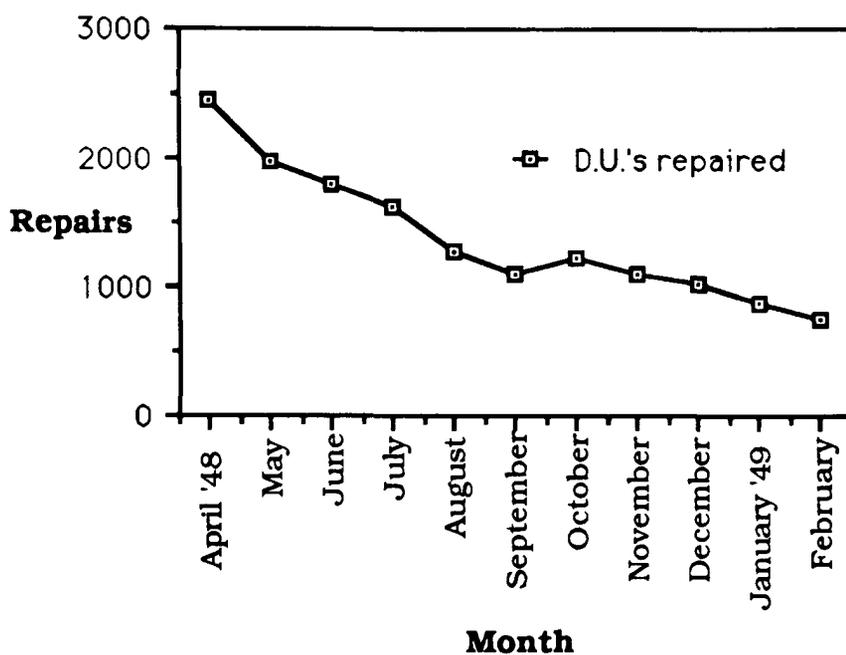
During the pre-currency reform period all the German authorities had been keenly aware that the introduction of a revalued currency would make it very difficult to fund housing construction. Within a very short period their fears proved more than justified. As early as August 1948 the Coal Control Group noted that building had fallen 'very much in arrears' due to financial difficulties.¹ Since the reform, lack of funds had led to the workforce employed on miners' housing being cut by about 30 percent.² In January 1949, despite good weather, completed repairs amounted to less than one third of the SVR's target monthly figure and, as the WAM report suggested, were also far below the pre-currency reform levels.³

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-1/38, UK/USCCG Paper, 'Present position with regard to the hard coal mining industry', note for British M.G. by British chairman, August 1948.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO ERP SEC 11/94-2/11, UK/USCCG report to BICO for August 1948; HStad NW73, 259, WAM, Memo, 15.11.1948.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS), Manpower, 7/51-1/3, UK/USCCG report to BICO, January 1949. Comparison is complicated by the fact that the standard of repair had probably risen since June 1948, although a GHH report suggests that normal standards were being applied even before the currency reform. See BBA 30,145, GHH Paper, 'Entwicklung des Wohnungsbaues des GHH Steinkohlenbergbau Mitte 1945-Mitte 1950', 9.9.1950.

Fig .2: Housing repairs 1948-1949
(dwelling units completed/month)¹



Part of the underlying financial problem was that rents were not sufficient to pay for construction. Rents had, for price and social policy reasons, been frozen since the 1930's. Yet because of costly raw materials and low labour productivity, construction costs were far higher than in the pre-war period. In June 1948, they were in fact double what they had been ten years earlier.² So at existing rents, it was not profitable to build new houses and often not financially possible even to repair existing ones.³ Thus much of the finance could not be raised on the capital market but required subsidy from owners, employers, the state or some other source. The need for subsidy was enhanced in the immediate post-currency reform period because the general capital shortages meant that even the profitable part of house construction was hard to

¹ Figures are taken from WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-2/2, CCCG Report to BICO, March 1949.

² O.Lübcke, *Die Subventionierung des Wohnungsbaues insbes. seit 1945*, Münster 1951, p.54.

³ *Ministertal-Blatt Nordrhein-Westfalens*, Ausgabe A, 6.4.1948, 1, 12, p.121; HStAD NW53, 465, Land Manpower Department, Housing & Building Branch to Chairman of Housing Reconstruction Committee, 5.5.1948.

raise on the market. Public money had repeatedly to be substituted for missing market loans.¹

This discrepancy between rents and building costs was a general problem in post-war Germany, but applied particularly to mining, where rents were even lower than average. Low rents had long been a way in which mining employers had tried to hold on to their workforces.² Between 1930 and 1949, the state had given house owners several opportunities to make legal rent increases, yet the mines had availed themselves of none of them.³

Empty coffers and closed purses

In the pre-1948 period, housing subsidies had come from the Land and the mines. But now, neither felt in a position to continue. The mines faced a severe financial crisis because of the changes in subsidy procedure. State subsidies received barely sufficed to meet normal operating costs, so that the UK/USCCG forbade the collieries from using the money to pay for housing.⁴ Even so, the industry began to go into debt.⁵ The DKBL wrote to the VfW in May 1948 describing the very precarious state of finances. As a temporary measure the Länder agreed to give aid but in general were of the opinion that investments should not burden the public budget.⁶

¹ Particularly in 1949 and again in 1951. See below and also HStad NW 10, 15, WAM, Circular to Regierungspräsidenten, 18.6.1951.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 3304, Fehlemann to Hensel, 25.11.1949, annex: 'Auszug aus einem Vortrag anlässlich der Siedlungsbautagung des bayerischen Bergbaus'.

³ See Julius Brecht, 'Die gemeinnützigen Wohnungsunternehmen in einer marktwirtschaftlichen Wohnversorgung', in *Deutsche Siedlungs- und Wohnpolitik*, pp.151-175, here p.164.

⁴ WWA F35, 3554, DKBL, Circular No. IV 1 - 6 to mining companies and collieries 19.3.1948.

⁵ WWA S22 (OMGUS), CO Hist Br 3/404-1/6, UK/USCCG paper, 'Financial Problems in the coal industry', 27.8.1948.

⁶ BAK (OMGUS) BICO COALCO 17/8188/11, BIB/P(48)88, Bipartite Board, Memo, 'Investment Credits for the hard coal mining industry', 21.6.1948.

Following the currency reform the situation deteriorated further. Up till December, the UK/USCCG encouraged the mines to make capital expenditure on the assumption that Marshall Plan funds would be made available through the Reconstruction Loan Corporation. By the end of 1948, the failure of the Corporation to take shape and the severity of the financial crisis forced the Control Group to take the extreme step of ordering the mines to desist from all further capital expenditure and even to discontinue inessential work in progress.¹ In March 1949 the Group reported that 'every week the financial situation gets tighter and tighter'.² Even the GBAG, the wealthiest of all the mining companies, was forced to bring its housing operation to a virtual standstill.³

For its part, the NRW government argued that the burden of financing miners' housing was such that the other Länder or the Bizonal government should help. Unless there was outside support, the SVR's miners' housing plan 'Ruhr 48/52', with its total cost of around 1.5 bn DM,⁴ would mean that, even after allowing for modest contributions from the mining industry and for the share which could be raised on the market, *all* of NRW's 200 Million DM annual housing budget would go to the miners, leaving nothing for other sections of the population. The NRW government did not believe it could justify this. For the population of NRW as a whole, less than a third of war-damaged houses had been repaired; for the miners, on the other hand, three quarters of damaged

¹ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-2/2, UK/USCCG report to BICO for December 1948; PA 2, 550, BIB/P(49)43, Bipartite Board, Report on financial problems in the coal mining industry, 16.3.1949.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/104-2/2, Minutes of 3rd Meeting of the CCGG, 23.3.1949, Appendix: Report by W.E.Fourqurean.

³ BBA 55,12200, Nr.10, Bergausschuß-Sitzung, 23.9.1949.

⁴ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/107-2/1-4, Joint Chairmen UK/USCCG to Joint Chairmen BICO, 9.12.1948, Appendix F: 'Finance for Non-Mine owned Miners' Housing'.

housing had now been put right.¹ Non-miners in NRW could reasonably expect a greater share of housing grants in the future. As the SVR director, Philip Rappaport (himself a supporter of special programmes for the miners) argued:²

Innerhalb des Ruhrgebiets sind schon z.T. dieserhalb allerstärkste soziale Spannungen aufgetreten, die sich verstärken und bis zur Unerträglichkeit steigern müssen, wenn immer weitere Millionen nur einer Arbeiterklasse zukommen, während die übrigen notleidenden Bevölkerungskreise mehr oder minder leer ausgehen.

It was to avoid this that, in the first months after the currency reform, NRW restricted itself to keeping existing projects going and would not fund new construction work for miners.³ Even then, mining still absorbed three times as much Land funds as the miners' share of the population would have entitled it to.⁴

In the period following the First World War, when a similar problem had applied, a special coal tax had been introduced, the proceeds of which had gone to finance miners' housing. Both NRW and the DKBL advocated the reintroduction of such a coal tax and in July 1948, the NRW cabinet voted to apply to the Bizonal authorities for the appropriate legislation.⁵ At the same time, NRW requested funds from the bizonal budget to provide interim cover until the coal levy was in operation.⁶ Concurrent with these efforts, BICO called upon the VfW to draw up

¹ HStAD NW9, 112, WAM, Memo, 'betr.: Mittelverteilung 40 Millionen-Programm', 25.1.1949.

² HStAD NW73,259, 'Darlegungen des Verbandsdirektors Dr.Ing. P.Rappaport, Essen, gelegentlich der Besichtigungsreise des bizonalen Bauwirtschaftsausschusses am 7.1.1949 im Ruhrgebiet', January 1949.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS), Co Hist Br 3/404-1/7, Minutes of the 13th Meeting of the UK/USCCG, 21.5.1948.

⁴ HStAD NW9, 112, WAM, Memo, 'Mittelverteilung 40 Millionen-Programm', 25.1.1949, annex 1.

⁵ BAK Z13, 198, DKBL to VfW, 15.7.1948: 'Die benötigten Mittel aus den ordentlichen Etats der Länder bzw. den Zweizonenämtern bereitzustellen, erscheint bei dem derzeitigen Zustand der öffentlichen Finanzen aussichtslos'; HStAD NW53, 643, Memo, 12.7.1948; Ministerpräsident NRW, 'Antrag des Herrn Ministerpräsidenten Nordrhein-Westfalen auf Bereitstellung von Mitteln zur Durchführung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramms', 13.7.1948.

⁶ HStAD NW53, 643, Ministerpräsident NRW to VfW, 24.7.1948.

proposals on how the mines' operating costs and investment needs, including miners' housing, might best be met.¹

Though they accepted the importance of housing in mining's regenerative strategy, the bizonal authorities were loath to accede or respond to any of these initiatives. The key change from the post-1918 reconstruction era was that in that period little priority had been given to stemming inflation, indeed inflation had consciously been preferred to the politically potentially explosive consequences of a post-war deflation. However, the experience of economic chaos in 1922-23 changed all that for succeeding generations and for the post-'45 policy-makers in particular. Thus, hostile to increases in the price of coal, the VfW would not entertain the idea of a sales tax.²

There was also hostility to other types of capital transfer towards heavy industry. Partly because of his anxieties about freeing the coal price, Erhard believed that recovery would best be encouraged by supporting the consumer goods industries and allowing the German people's huge demand for clothing and household goods to fuel economic growth. He was therefore unwilling to tax growth in these areas by charging a levy to help the mines.

On the housing question itself, the authorities could take refuge behind the fact that housing was formally a responsibility of the individual Länder and this was indeed the argument used by the VfF when in September 1948 it turned down NRW's claim for bizonal funds.³ As later developments were to show, however, this argument was somewhat disingenuous, since the formal responsibility of

¹ BAK Z4, 59, BICO M(48)/52, 23.7.1948.

² A letter from the VfW argued that an increase in the domestic coal price 'kann angesichts der schwerwiegenden Rückwirkung auf die sich anbahnenden Preissenkungstendenzen und das Kosten- und Preisniveau der kohleverbrauchenden Industrie unter keinen Umständen empfohlen werden'. See BAK Z13, 198, VfW to Direktorialkanzlei, 14.3.1949.

³ HStad NW53, 643, VfF to Minister-Präsident NRW, 7.9.1948.

the Länder did not preclude federal support. It was a mark of how bad relations between NRW and bizonal authorities were on the issue that in June 1948 two separate conferences on mining's problems and needs were held in the Ruhr *simultaneously*, one chaired by NRW and one under the auspices of the VfW, the representatives of both organisations refusing to attend the other's conference.¹

The fight for central funding

Because of the Allies' interest and because not even Erhard could allow the mining industry to be totally starved of funds, the Economic Council did resolve in June 1948 (following the VfW's conference) to set up a special committee which would investigate the financial problems of the industry with particular reference amongst other things to miners' housing.² Yet it was noteworthy that the first meeting of the committee did not take place until November.³ The lack of interest of the VfW and VfF in the committee's proceedings was striking. In March 1949, for example, the committee invited Erhard and a senior representative of the VfF to take part in the discussions. Erhard notified the committee that he was elsewhere on business but that a *Ministerialdirektor* would appear in his place. In the event, the *Ministerialdirektor* did not appear either, but sent a subordinate. The behaviour of the VfF was even more offensive: they sent along a representative who had been in the department for only a few weeks and was unable to answer even those questions that had been agreed in advance.⁴ Under these circumstances it was not surprising that the

¹ See the file HStAD NW53,736 which deals with the NRW conference and PA 2,549, President of the Economic Council to Minister President Karl Arnold, 2.6.1948.

² PA 2, 549, WAM to the President of the Economic Council, 11.6.1948; BAK Z4, 58, Wirtschaftsrat des Vereinigten Wirtschaftsgebietes, Drucksache 19149 Nr. 1606: 'Zusammenfassender Bericht des Sonderausschusses zur Behandlung von Fragen der Kohlenförderung', 5.8.1949.

³ PA 2, 223, Minutes of the first meeting of the Sonderausschuß zur Behandlung von Fragen der Kohlenförderung, 3.11.1948.

⁴ A similar performance had already taken place in November of the previous year. See, PA 2, 271, Dr. Georg Berger to the President of the Economic Council, 7.3.1949.

committee's progress was slow and the minutes show no evidence of the committee being under pressure from the German side to produce speedy conclusions.

For their part, the Allies continued to apply pressure to the German authorities for a speedy solution to the mining industry's capital requirements. In August 1948, the Coal Control Group proposed to BICO a number of measures including price increases, payment of the full export value of coal to the mines and further subsidies from the bizonal budget. It also suggested using Counterpart funds¹ from the Marshall plan to meet the capital needs of the mines including housing and also to fund non-mine owned housing.² Some of these measures could be implemented by the Allies directly or were carried out at their behest; (on the question of exports, there was disagreement amongst the Allies themselves as to whether the mines should receive the full export price³ so that as an immediate measure only a limited export rebate was offered). But the provision of a larger bizonal subsidy lay in German hands and continued to be opposed by the bizonal authorities, who tended to use delaying tactics, rather than outright opposition as a means of defeating Allied intentions. In August 1948 BICO sent a stiffly worded memo to the Executive Committee (*Verwaltungsrat*), directing it 'to give urgent attention to the problem of financing miners' housing which has become acute'.⁴ There was little response and in October 1948, the two Military

¹ Under the Marshall Plan, the Germans received free imports of goods and equipment from the US. The value of these shipments was paid by the recipients into a special account, the counterpart funds, whence it was invested in economic sectors suffering from capital shortages. Investment decisions were made jointly by Allied and German experts.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), CO Hist Br 3/404-1/6, UK/USCCG paper, 'Financial Problems in the coal industry', 27.8.1948; UK/USCCG to Joint Chairmen BICO, 9.12.1948, Appendix F: 'Finance for non-mine owned miners' housing'.

³ Months later, Allied discussions on this question had still not reached a conclusion. See PA 2, 223, Minutes of the fourth meeting of the Sonderausschuß zur Behandlung von Fragen der Kohleförderung, 3.3.1949; by the end of 1950, Germany was still not receiving the full proceeds for its exported coal. See Volker Bahl, *Staatliche Politik am Beispiel der Kohle*, Frankfurt/New York 1977, p.73.

⁴ BAK Z13, 198, BICO M(48)71, BICO J.Sec to Chairman, Executive Committee, 27.8.1948.

Governors once more requested the German officials to develop plans to subsidise miners' housing and tried to facilitate a solution by pointing out that the problem was short-term and would therefore not set permanent and binding precedents.¹

In November 1948 there appeared, for the first time, to be an encouraging response from the German side. The director of the bizonal Executive Committee, Hermann Pünder, proposed to the Allies that the Länder provide 12,000,000 DM a month to help finance miner's housing. However, the Länder ministries (apart from NRW!) rejected this proposal and, given earlier statements by the regional representatives, it is unlikely that the Executive Committee had expected anything else.² The 'refugee Länder' in particular resented the idea of giving NRW special support and tended to argue that providing homes for their refugees was at least as important as building homes for miners.³

By 1949, the Allies had become extremely impatient with the delays in providing the mines with funds for investment and house building.⁴ In March, a major paper from the Bipartite Board on the financial problems of the mining industry, the so-called Schumacher report, began with the following statement:⁵

'Military Government has had bold plans for the rehabilitation of the coal mining industry. The German mining technicians have proved enthusiastic co-planners and implementers. Bold physical planning and execution, however, has not been matched by equally bold financial measures. A Reconstruction Loan Corporation (with limited resources) was planned immediately prior to currency reform. After eight months,

¹ *Akten zur Vorgeschichte der BRD 1945 - 1949. Band 4*, Munich 1983, p.858; see also BAK Z13, 198, Memo from Verwaltungsrat des VWG, 6.12.1948.

² Pünder to BICO, 29.11.1948, in *Akten zur Vorgeschichte der BRD 1945 - 1949. Band 5*, Munich 1981, p.261, note 54; Z13, 198, Finanzminister NRW to Vorsitz, Verwaltungsrat, 10.1.1949; WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BISEC 11/109-1/7-8, Pünder to BICO Chairmen, 20.1.1949.

³ *Akten zur Vorgeschichte, Band 5*, p.73, footnote 29.

⁴ BAK Z13, 198, BICO J.Sec, Memo(48)102 to President of the Economic Council, 15.12.1948.

⁵ PA 2, 550, BIB/P(49)43, Bipartite Board, Report on financial problems in the coal mining industry, 16.3.1949.

however, the corporation is not yet in complete operation. Nor have the Germans come forward with other effective means of providing much needed long-term credit resources.'

The problems were, as the report noted, not restricted to mining:¹

The larger context of the problem is that what is happening in the coal mining industry is not peculiar to that industry. Military Government wants, and the ERP plans require, the stepping up of production. Yet since currency reform, only meagre long-term capital funds have been available even for the most essential capital development projects.

Considerable investment had been made, but only by unorthodox short-term means and this could not continue. At the same time a BICO paper specifically on miners' housing urged that 'this is too important a problem to become snarled by some of the old conflicts, such as whether this is a German problem or an Allied problem; whether this is a problem for the British Zone Länder as opposed to the Southern Länder; whether this is a problem solely of welfare or morale versus a more business-like approach' and argued that the poor progress of 1948 made it necessary now to build twice as fast as over the previous two years.² The Allies believed that housing was absolutely essential if the workforce was to be expanded and productivity improved. 'Without adequate housing facilities, it is doubtful whether the present labor force and the required rate of recruitment can be maintained. The problem of housing is more than one of morals [sic! - presumably 'morale' was meant, MR]; it is one of the most serious bottlenecks to increasing production and reaching target goals'.³

On the basis of the Schumacher report, BICO suggested that 400 million DM be provided for Ruhr miner's housing, of which 150 million DM should come from Bizonal funds and 160 million DM from the Reconstruction Corporation,

¹ Ibid.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BECG PA Br 11/122-3/3, BICO paper, 'Miners' Housing Programme', March 1949.

³ PA 2, 550, BIB/P(49)43, Bipartite Board, Report on financial problems in the coal mining industry, 16.3.1949.

alongside 50 million DM from NRW and 40 million DM from private sources. It had thus largely accepted the arguments of NRW.¹

However, the bizonal authorities were no better disposed than before. Unlike the Schumacher report, which had advocated new taxes to finance the payment to the mines, they argued that such taxes appeared 'weder notwendig noch wirtschaftlich tragbar'.² They reiterated their suspicion that an increase in the coal price would trigger inflation.³ They suggested that 300 million DM was the maximum that could reasonably be spent on miners' housing in all regions, given that no more than 1.5 bn DM was being spent on housing as a whole. Once again, it was argued that housing was a Land matter. No doubt under the influence of the Southern Länder, the bizonal authorities suggested that the bulk of the money should come from NRW. The VfW proposed that NRW should put up 175 million DM, most of it in the financial year 1949-50; 30 million DM should come from the other Länder while the remainder of the 300 million DM could, it argued, be raised by normal financing methods. In order to avoid delays, however, it suggested that 50 million DM of Counterpart funds might be used as a bridging loan until the capital market had properly revived.⁴ Predictably enough, NRW declared itself unable to come up with 175 million DM, a figure which after all corresponded to over 85 percent of its housing budget, and repeated its demand for a coal tax.⁵

¹ Ibid.

² PA 2, 550, Hermann Pünder to BICO J.Sec, 30.5.1949.

³ BAK Z13, 198, VfW to Direktorialkanzlei, 14.3.1949.

⁴ WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO BECG PABr 11/134-3/15, Undated copy of memo from VfW, Abt. I A, 'Investition und Finanzierungsplan des Ver. Wirtschaftsgebiets für das Haushaltsjahr 1949/1950'; BAK Z4, 58, Wirtschaftsrat des Vereinigten Wirtschaftsgebietes, Drucksache 19149, Nr. 1606: 'Zusammenfassender Bericht des Sonderausschusses zur Behandlung von Fragen der Kohlenförderung', 5.8.1949; PA 2, 550, Hermann Pünder to BICO J.Sec, 30.5.1949.

⁵ BAK Z4, 58, 'Kurzprotokoll der 8. Sitzung des Sonderausschusses', 22.6.1949; Z13, 198, WAM to Sonderausschuß, 8.6.1949.

In June '49, the Sonderausschuß met again. The minutes record a pithy summary of the situation from the chairman, the SPD delegate Dr. Berger, '1) Die Zuständigkeit der Länder im Wohnungsbau ist gegeben. 2) Das was die Länder tun können ist nicht ausreichend. 3) Es kommt darauf an, die Fehlmenge zumindest zu überbrücken.'¹ Presumably because it was aware of both ministerial and Länder resistance to any more extensive measures, the committee limited itself to recommending that 30 million DM be made available from bizonal funds.² It also recommended that at least one fifth of total investment in the mining industry should be spent on mine-owned housing. Two days later, the Economic Council endorsed these proposals.³

This aid, though welcome, fell far short of what was required, as a comparison with the figures above makes clear. The 30 million was not even just for the Ruhr but had to be shared out with the other mining regions.⁴ Even if some extra money were to be available from the Länder and some intermediate finance gained from the counterpart funds, the sums envisaged did not cover a fraction of what was necessary for a speedy solution to the mines' housing shortage. In any case, up till autumn 1949 no money at all had been received from either Länder or counterpart funds (an earlier GARIOA payment of 135 million DM to the mining industry had been expressly reserved for industrial and not housing use).⁵

It is hard to establish exactly what impact the lack of funds had on building progress, since the building statistics for the 1948-1949 period are (for reasons

¹ BAK Z4, 58, 'Kurzprotokoll der 8. Sitzung des Sonderausschusses', 22.6.1949.

² Ibid.

³ BAK Z4, 58, Wirtschaftsrat des Vereinigten Wirtschaftsgebietes, Drucksache 1949 Nr. 1606: 'Zusammenfassender Bericht des Sonderausschusses zur Behandlung von Fragen der Kohlenförderung', 5.8.1949.

⁴ The Ruhr received about 25,000,000 DM. BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1367, DKBL table: 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', no date (October 1949).

⁵ Ibid., note 4.

that are pursued below) particularly misleading and contradictory. It will not be far wrong, however, to assume that only half the intended number of dwelling units had been provided. In the second half of 1949, progress was no better, indeed probably worse, than the pre-currency reform performance.¹ It was clear that at this rate it would take years to satisfy the housing demands of even those miners who were already in the industry, let alone to provide decent housing for future recruits.

The Economic Council's decision to provide 30 million DM and temporary uncertainties in the coal market brought a brief halt to the lobbying in Bonn but in 1950 it began once more in earnest. Once again, NRW made its own financial support conditional on Federal aid, though realistically it limited its immediate demands to a repeat payment of 30 million DM. It seemed quite likely that Bonn would agree to this and so building in the Ruhr was allowed to begin. In the event, however, Bonn put up resistance despite the fact that even with the 30 million DM the housing programme would only be about half of what was necessary, as the DKBL pointed out to the Federal Economics Ministry (BWIM).² The BWIM was sympathetic, but the Federal Finance Minister (BFM) refused to countenance a repeat of the previous year's subsidy.³

Since NRW had made further support contingent on a Federal contribution, the BFM's decision dealt a heavy blow to housing activity in the Ruhr. By the end of 1950, NRW had put up only 28 million DM or slightly more than one third of its envisaged total commitment.⁴ 'Dadurch ist der Zustand entstanden',

¹ In all 8,633 d.u.'s were repaired in the Ruhr from 1.7.-31.12.1949, see HStad NW73.73, WAM, Referat IA 304, table: 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau. Soll ab 1.1.50-30.9.1952', 22.2.1950; for the share of light repairs see HStad NW73, 120, SVR Quarterly report for IVth quarter 1949 (Unless otherwise stated, all future SVR monthly/quarterly reports referred to can be found in the above file).

² BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, DKBL to BWIM, 4.8.1950.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo, 15.8.1950.

⁴ HStad NW10,83, WAM III B 1, Memo, 10.1.1951.

complained the SVR, 'daß eine Reihe der aus ERP-Mitteln gegebenen 1.Hypotheiken, für die auch Arbeitgebermittel der Zechen zur Verfügung stehen (Umsatzsteuerrückflüsse) letzten Endes nicht für Wohnungsbau-Zwecke verwendet werden können, weil hierfür Landes- bzw. Bundesdarlehen fehlen.'¹ The Federal Economics and Housing Ministers continued to press the DKBL's case and finally, in December 1950, the cabinet resolved to provide 36 million DM for miners' housing as long as an equivalent amount were forthcoming from counterpart funds.² Yet even after this decision, the Finance Minister prevented the money from being allocated. He argued that the oil tax revenues that were supposed to cover the subsidy were in fact lower than expected. By September 1951, the funds still had not been released and indeed were never transferred.³

1950-1951: Korea and the Miners' Housing Law

Though the industry had been unsuccessful in obtaining greater Federal support, the discussions in Bonn revealed that a different political climate was emerging. It was noteworthy, for example, that the BWiM had consistently endorsed the industry's demands and had pleaded the industry's case in discussions with other departments.⁴ In December 1950, the NRW cabinet made a renewed application for a coal levy; though no more successful than its predecessors this was the first to enjoy support from the Economics Minister. It was hostility from the BFM and the Länder representatives in the Bundesrat that had

¹ HStad NW10, 83, SVR to WAM, 16.10.1950.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BFM to BWoM, 12.9.1950.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, copy of letter from Adenauer to Schäffler, 7.9.1951; HStad NW10, 83, WAM to BWoM, 23.2.1951; Minutes of 117th cabinet meeting on 19th December, in Hans Booms (ed.), *Kabinettsprotokolle der Bundesregierung*, Vol 2, Boppard am Rhein, 1984, p.898, note 23; HStad NW73, 100, extract from *Glückauf* 1952: 'Der Wiederaufbauminister zum Wohnungsbau für Bergleute'.

⁴ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo, 25.8.1950.

prevented it.¹ A sign of this new mood was that when in the cabinet discussions about a possible coal levy Finance Ministry representatives argued that it was up to the Länder to give aid to miners' housing, the Minister for Economics was joined by the Labour Ministry, the Minister for the Marshall Plan and the Minister for Justice in refuting this. In 1949, by contrast, none of the bizonal departmental directors had opposed the notion of Länder responsibility.² As another sign of his support for miners' housing, Erhard wrote to the President of the Hauptamt für Sofort-Hilfe (HafSH), the body responsible for allotting aid to refugees, asking if it was possible to make a contribution to the housing programme.³

In part, this new mood was the result of a growing awareness within the BWiM that the contradiction between the *laissez-faire* approach to capital movements, on the one hand, and the continued price controls in capital goods, on the other, meant that heavy industry and particularly mining was being starved of capital, thus undermining the entire economy's prospects for growth. Outside the Economics Ministry, too, cabinet colleagues and senior Christian Democrats showed growing impatience with Erhard's failure to ensure sufficient capital flows to the capital goods sector.⁴

However, much more important than such shifts in domestic opinion was, as Abelshauser and Adamsen have documented, the new pressure from the US. Throughout 1948 and 1949, the Allies had (as the example of miners' housing has shown) grown increasingly concerned about the failure to direct investment towards heavy industry, about the lack of response to the Federal Republic's

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo, 11.12.1950 and letter to WAM with same date; BWoM, Memo, 6.12.1950.

² Minutes of 115th cabinet meeting on 5/6 Dezember, Point 13, in Booms (ed.), *Kabinettsprotokolle*. Vol 2, p.871.

³ HStAD NW10,83, copy of letter from Erhard to President, HafSH, 27.2.1951.

⁴ Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.66ff.

growing unemployment and, in 1950-1 particularly, about West Germany's burgeoning trade deficit.¹ Nevertheless, until 1950, Erhard was largely able to keep his freedom of action. It was the outbreak of the Korean war in June 1950 that transformed the situation. Suddenly, America ceased to be the slightly overbearing uncle, concerned to see the investment in his nephew's education well spent and became now the stern father, set on steering an errant son in the right direction. In the view of the United States, Germany had to accept its responsibilities in the protection of the free world against Communism; its role was to supply raw materials and capital goods to those Western economies now hard at work producing armaments and it was therefore vital for the American war effort that Germany use its resources effectively.² Though American pressure reached its high point only in 1951, the last months of 1950 saw the West German government increasingly resigned to the necessity of a more active management of the economy.

As well as heralding a new urgency in American representations, the Korean war also initiated a new phase of growth in the West German economy and this too exposed the weaknesses in coal mining. In December 1950 the government was forced to initiate temporary power cuts in order to husband scarce coal supplies.³ The coal shortages increased public awareness of the mining industry's investment needs. 'Erst die seit Mai 1950 einsetzende Verknappung der Kohle', noted Fehleemann, the DKBL's housing expert, 'hat in der breiten Öffentlichkeit den Bergarbeiter-Wohnungsbau als das Problem Nr.1. des Kohlenbergbaus und somit der deutschen Wirtschaft in den Vordergrund

¹ Abelshausen, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.65ff & p.76ff; Werner Abelshausen, 'Ansätze "korporativer Marktwirtschaft" in der Korea-Krise der frühen fünfziger Jahre. Ein Briefwechsel zwischen dem Hohen Kommissar John McCloy und Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1982, 30, 4, pp.715-756, here pp.734-5.

² Abelshausen, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.76ff; Abelshausen, 'Ansätze "korporativer Marktwirtschaft"', p.722ff.

³ Abelshausen, *Der Ruhrkohlenbergbau seit 1945*, p.70.

gerückt'.¹ Quite apart from the general goal of offering good quality housing, the accelerated pace of recruitment meant that the mines began to run out of any dwelling space at all.²

In housing policy, the first direct response to the new situation came not from Bonn but from the American Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA, later MSA), the body which supervised the allocation of Counterpart funds. Ever since Korea, noted the Federal Housing Ministry (BWoM), the Americans had shown 'stärkstes Interesse für den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau'.³ Hitherto, the limited ERP funds given to miners' housing had been offered at market rates, as a substitute for other types of market loan and had therefore not been a genuine subsidy.⁴ Now, however, the ECA proposed more positive measures.⁵ The immediate stimulus here was a press release issued by the DKBL in October 1950 which conveyed the danger of the present slow pace of building. A few days later, the ECA organised a fact-finding mission to the Ruhr and in November, the DKBL was requested to outline a housing programme based on 35 million DM, later revised to 45 million, of ERP funds.⁶ Though the negotiations as to the form of the building programme were to prove very complex and involved, work on the building projects began in late Spring 1951.⁷

¹ Ges.Verb File 'Wohnungswesen 4 Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm 41 Programme 1951-1953', Paper from Fehlemann, 'Das Gesetz zur Förderung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaus im Kohlenbergbau und sein Einfluß auf den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', 12.11.1951.

² See HStAD NW62,386, LAA NRW, Report for December 1951 and NW45,207, Report for October 1951.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo 'für die Ressortbespr. am 1.2.1951 betr. Sonderprogramm Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau 1951', 31.1.1951.

⁴ Except in the limited sense that, given the prevailing capital shortage, the 'market rates' charged by ERP were still lower than the mines would have had to pay to obtain loans from other sources. BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo, 7.11.1950.

⁵ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo, 28.9.1950.

⁶ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1367, copy of letter from SVR to WAM, 16.10.1950; B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo, 13.10.1950; Memo, 7.11.1950, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm 1951'; Memo 'für die Ressortbespr. am 1.2.1951 betr. Sonderprogramm Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau 1951', 31.1.1951; HStAD NW10, 90, DKBL to WAM, 12.6.1951, annex: 'Zusammenfassung der wichtigsten Vorgänge über die Verhandlungen betr.: ERP-Programm 1951'.

⁷ HStAD NW10, 90, DKBL to WAM, 12.6.1951.

On the German side, the pressure grew for a greater national commitment to miners' housing. Initially, the ECA tied its support to the condition that at least as much money be forthcoming from Bonn.¹ (Later, however, the failure of the Finance Minister to comply did not lead to ECA support being withdrawn). NRW, too, renewed its lobbying in Bonn. In December 1950, as already noted, it again mooted the idea of a coal levy. In January, all the major parties in the NRW parliament united to pass a motion calling upon the Land government to undertake all possible steps to promote the building of miners' housing and to persuade the Federal Government of the necessity of further support.² In February, the WAM wrote to the Federal Housing Ministry expressing its dismay at Bonn's failure to endorse a miners' housing levy.³ The mining employers kept up the pressure too, with the Federal Coal Commissar, Martin Sogemeier, declaring in June 1951 that an accelerated housing programme was the only way to prevent a dangerous drain of labour away from the mines.⁴ In addition, 1951 saw two major international commitments to improve the productivity of German coal. In August the Council of Ministers in the OEEC agreed on a broad programme of productivity increases in Western Europe with special emphasis on German coal production. At the same time, the ECA in Washington outlined a similar productivity programme - again with special emphasis on coal. The ECA reckoned that there was an annual shortfall of 30-50 million tons of coal in Europe.⁵ As a result of these initiatives, a special committee was set up in Germany, headed by the Minister for the Marshall Plan, to look into ways of increasing productivity in coal mining.⁶

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo, 25.10.1950.

² HStad NW10, 83, Landtag NRW, '2. Wahlperiode, Bd.1, Drucksache Nr.142'.

³ HStad NW10,83, WAM to BWoM, 23.2.1951.

⁴ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 4391, Hensel to Kattenstroth, 5.6.1951.

⁵ IGBEA T4, Bundesminister für den Marshallplan to IGB and DGB, 2.10.1951.

⁶ Ibid.

The combination of American pressure, regional and industrial lobbying and the coal shortages was irresistible. By summer 1951, both the majority of Bundestag delegates and the cabinet acknowledged the need for major investment measures in the mining industry, including miners' housing. In the case of housing, it was clear that neither the mining industry nor the Länder in which the mines were situated were in a position to provide adequate funding.¹ As is well known from Abelshauser's and Adamsen's work, a package of investment measures was accepted, the most important element of which was the Investitions-Hilfegesetz (IHG) of 1952. For miners' housing, however, the breakthrough came in October 1951 with the acceptance of the Miners' Housing Law² which finally, three and a half years after the currency reform, introduced a coal levy to pay for housing.

The law raised for a period of three years (extendable if necessary) a levy of 1 DM on every ton of coal sold. The revenue was to flow into a central fund (*Bundestreuhandvermögen*) whence it would be allotted to the mining regions by the Federal Housing Minister and then to individual building projects by special regional committees created by the law. The money was to be given in the form of low-interest loans, as a supplement to loans raised on the capital market, employer contributions and regional subsidies. In exceptional cases, non-repayable subsidies could be made. Though some of the other clauses of the Act were not to the liking of the NRW Reconstruction Ministry, its financial terms fulfilled all NRW's wishes. Henceforth, NRW was able to restrict mining's share of its housing budget to a level equivalent to the miners' share of the regions' population.

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 4391,164. Sitzung des Deutschen Bundestags, 26.9.1951; B134, 1372, Extract from the 'Kurziprotokoll über die 175. Kabinettsitzung der Bundesregierung am 26.9.1951'.

² Gesetz zur Förderung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaues im Kohlenbergbau. *BgBl* 1951, Nr.50, p.865ff.

Miners' housing, investment and economic recovery

Why had the mines had to wait so long for funding? Was it simply short-sightedness on the part of the government? The Federal Government wanted coal to grow with the rest of the economy without central help, yet at the same time it maintained tight price controls. Out of fear of inflation it shrunk back from introducing a truly free market,¹ without seeming to recognise that this in turn necessitated a break with free market principles of capital allocation.

Erhard's position was not quite as irrational as it appears. It is very possible that he was counting on more Marshall Plan aid being forthcoming than was actually the case.² In addition, his policy of favouring consumer industries at the cost of heavy industry was not simply a strategy for growth. It is a little remembered fact that Erhard was quite prepared to accept some retardation of the growth process as the result of favouring the consumer industries if by doing so he could strengthen popular confidence in the economy. It was Erhard, after all, who announced before the currency reform that:³

Ich persönlich würde keinen Zweifel darüber lassen, daß man das bisherige Maß an Opferfähigkeit dem Volke einfach nicht mehr zumuten kann. Ich würde lieber ganz bewußt eine gewisse Rückständigkeit, einen längeren Nachholzeitraum innerhalb der Produktionssphäre hinnehmen, wenn wir durch eine Steigerung und Ausreicherung des Konsums eine Besserung der sozialen Lage erreichen könnten.

It would go beyond the limits of this study to determine whether, if there had been no Korea boom, Erhard would have been able to continue neglecting heavy industry and mining in particular. It seems unlikely. What is certain is that for miners' housing, as will be seen, the change in policy came rather late.

¹ Of course, there were good reasons for not totally freeing the coal price. Quite apart from the question of coal's impact on general price stability, there was no competition between the mines, sales being organised centrally by the DKBL, so that the industry would have been in a position to take monopolistic advantage of a market still heavily wedded to coal as a source of energy.

² The author would like to express his gratitude to Professor Werner Abelshäuser for this insight.

³ Adamsen, *Investitionshilfe für die Ruhr*, p.41.

Mining had partly wasted the best opportunity of the post-war years to win a stable workforce.

Alternative sources of finance and building progress, 1948-51

Exactly what impact did the lack of central funding have on the housing programme? To answer this it is necessary to look at the available statistics on miners' housing.

These present some problems of interpretation. The best figures available are the monthly, later quarterly, reports from the SVR (most of which have been preserved) on the progress of repairs, extensions, reconstruction and new building throughout the 1948-51 period.¹ The reports have the value that, unlike many of the mining employers' statistics, they include the so-called 'private' sector, i.e. miners' housing owned neither by the mines nor by housing associations.² The problem with the SVR figures is that they were substantially revised half way through 1949 as a result both of checks in the municipal building departments (which revealed that a lot of completed building had never been properly reported) and possibly also of political pressure to match the employers' figures.³

¹ See p.232, footnote 1.

² In any case, there is no complete, continuous and detailed record of employers' statistics. It is very possible that the release of the DKBL's files held in the Mining Archive will result in such figures becoming available.

³ HStad NW73.120, SVR reports for July 1949 and 4th Q 1949. For the political pressure on the SVR see NW73.73, WAM IA304 (13) to Director of SVR, 28.9.1949.

Table 7: Repairs and new construction completed according to SVR reports¹

<u>Until end of:</u>	<u>repairs</u>	<u>D.u.'s completed from 1.2.1948</u>	
		<u>new and re- construction</u> ²	<u>new/recon/sub-div attic conversions</u>
July 1948	12544	775 ³	943
Dec 1948	18280	1569	1895
June 1949	23471	3191	3663
Dec 1949	47247	11184	15421
June 1950	53418	15806	21819
Dec 1950	58991	n.a.	31138
June 1951	63876	29722	37157
Dec 1951	65995	38108	46408

As is evident from table 7, the revisions resulted in a massive jump, particularly in the repairs figures but also in new construction, for the second half of 1949. By the end of the year, the cumulative repairs figure was double what it had been at the end of June, while new building had more than quadrupled. From other sources, we know that the actual number of repairs completed in the second half of 1949 was in fact only about 8,600, or roughly one third of what the SVR's figures seem to suggest, while the volume of re- and new construction lay around 3,700 d.u.'s - less than half the SVR figure.⁴ Clearly this adjustment introduces a measure of uncertainty into the statistics.⁵ However, if, as seems a reasonable assumption, the previously unreported housing was evenly spread throughout the Feb 1948-July 1949 period,⁶ then the following table provides a fair guide to the changing pace of house-building:

¹ Source: SVR monthly and quarterly reports in HStad NW73,120.

² Includes a small number of Nissen huts and prefabs.

³ Mostly Nissen huts and prefabs.

⁴ See HStad NW73,73, WAM IA-304, table 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau. Soll ab 1.1.50-30.9.52', 22.2.1950.

⁵ A reassuring point, however, is that the UVR evidently believed the revised figures to be accurate. See the figures in UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1953/1954*, Essen 1954, pp.32-33 which match those of the SVR very closely.

⁶ It may well be, although the SVR did not acknowledge the possibility, that a number of the unreported houses actually stemmed from the pre-Feb. 1948 period. It is not surprising that the SVR, concerned to bolster the image of its current plan, did not try to backdate the houses in this way. The result is that the table below is probably somewhat on the generous side.

Table 8: Pace of housing construction 1948-51¹

<u>In half year ending:</u>	<u>repairs</u> (d.u.'s/month)	<u>new/recon</u> ² (d.u.'s per month)
July 1948	2990	383
Dec 1948 ³	2040	393
June 1949	1760	524
Dec 1949	1440	613
June 1950	1030	770
Dec 1950	930	n.a.
June 1951	810	1160 ⁴
Dec 1951	350	1398

The most important fact revealed by the table is that though, as we know, the miners' housing programme had to wait until the end of 1951 for a major central subsidy, it began recovering earlier from the depths to which it plummeted in the aftermath of the currency reform. True, the number of repairs continued to fall but this reflected the dwindling number of properties available for restoration rather than a shortage of resources. New construction and total rebuilding ('reconstruction'), both of which involved far more resources than repairs, increased substantially. Over the period June 1950 - June 1951, for example, the monthly completion rate for new and rebuilt houses was almost three times as high as it had been at the end of 1948.

Where did the money for this building come from? Unfortunately there are no satisfactory, consistent compilations before 1952 and probably will not be until the DKBL records are made available. A UVR report notes the following total expenditure on miners' housing, but does not give the source of the funding.

¹ Figures up to June 1949 calculated from the adjusted SVR cumulative figures; Dec. 1949 calculated from WAM figures in HStad NW73,73, WAM IA-304, table 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau. Soll ab 1.1.50-30.9.52', 22.2.1950; remaining figures calculated directly from SVR reports.

² Excluding subdivisions and attic conversions.

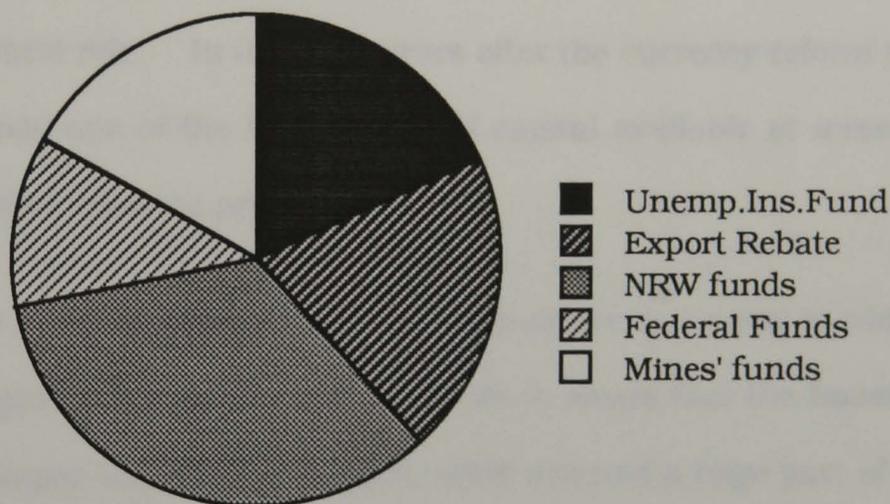
³ Five month period.

⁴ Twelve month period.

Table 9: Expenditure on Ruhr Miners' Housing (UVR figures)¹

Year	Expenditure (mill DM)	
	Overall Housing	Mine-owned housing alone
1948 ²	71,500,000	n.a.
1949	160,000,000	74,000,000
1950	160,000,000	61,000,000
1951	333,000,000	87,000,000
After intro of Miners' Housing Levy:		
1952	500,000,000	79,000,000
1953	445,000,000	42,000,000

With the aid of various Land and DKBL reports it is however possible to paint a more detailed picture. For 1948-1949, we can make a comprehensive breakdown of all funding and, for the following years, of public subsidies (see figure 3 and table 10).

Fig 3: Sources of subsidy for miners' housing 1948-9³

Total spending 247,476,000 DM

¹ UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1953-4*, pp.30 and 41.

² Currency reform to end of year.

³ Calculation from WAM and DKBL figures for NRW. See HStad NW73,136, WAM IA203, 'Übersicht über die Verteilung der Wohnungsbaumittel des Landes seit der Geldordnung' and BAK-ZwSt.H B134,1367, DKBL table, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', October 1949. The two sets of figures match each other closely when allowance is made for the fact that the DKBL did not include privately owned housing, while the Land authorities only listed public subsidies. The overall sum is higher than the UVR total above because it includes the Cologne and Aachen area.

Table 10: Public subsidies for miners' housing in NRW 1948-1951¹

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total expenditure on housing (UVR figures)</u> ²	<u>Land & Federal grants</u>	<u>Unemp. insurance funds</u>	<u>Marshall Plan funds ECA</u>
1948/9	231.5	111.4	45.0	--
1950	160.0	38.2 ³	--	23.1
1951	333.0	35.0 ⁴	38.0 ⁵	145.0 ⁶

The first and most obvious point is that even before the levy was introduced, sizeable public subsidies were received. Public subsidy for house building was an accepted part of the Social Market Economy. Rents were controlled by law and the main brunt of housing expenditure fell on the Länder. The Federal Government gave assistance in as much as it provided funds to enable refugees build a new home or find accommodation near a place of work (*Aufbaudarlehen*). More unexpectedly, the labour insurance funds⁷ turn out to have played an important role. In the early years after the currency reform the insurance funds formed one of the few sources of capital available at interest rates affordable for social housing projects.⁸

But perhaps the most striking aspect of housing expenditure is the way in which its composition changed from year to year. In 1948-9, aware that the housing programme would collapse without its support, NRW diverted a large part of its

¹ Source UVR and WAM as above.

² Ruhr only.

³ Figure taken from a different WAM table so as to include the funds reaching the mines via the refugee relocation plan (Umsiedlungsprogramm). Without the relocation funds, the figure would have been around 28 million. See HStAD NW10,83, IIIB 3-348. 'Übersicht über die für den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau durch NRW bereitgestellten Wohnungsbaumittel', 6.6.1951.

⁴ As at 20.6.1951. It is possible that additional funding was voted later in the year.

⁵ Source - as note 3.

⁶ Source: BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 21258, BWIM III A 2, 'Zusammenstellung aller für den Kohlenbergbau seit der Währungsreform durchgeführten Kreditmaßnahmen', 19.8.1955.

⁷ Arbeitslosenstockmittel.

⁸ See for instance BBA 55, 12200, Nr.10, Minutes of Bergausschuß meeting on 23.9.1949.

housing budget to the mines. In 1950, it resolved to reduce this contribution substantially. As a result of some astute manoeuvring from the DKBL, the Reconstruction Ministry found itself committed to in fact a very sizeable subsidy for the miners' housing programme. However, when it transpired that no aid would be forthcoming from Bonn, the Ministry used this as an excuse to bring its commitment down to something nearer the originally envisaged levels¹ and public subsidies ran to less than half the levels of 1949. Nevertheless, overall spending did not fall and this was undoubtedly the result of the new income tax law introduced in April 1949.² The new law introduced the notion of accelerated depreciation while (§7c) allowing the employers to include spending on house construction as capital spending.³ For those mines making a profit this was, as the DKBL itself commented, 'eine außerordentliche Begünstigung' which provided a major incentive to proceed with new house building.⁴ According to calculations made in the early 1950's by the Friedrich

¹ HStAD NW10,83, WAM, Memo, 3.4.1951; BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM, Memo, 19.3.1951. In 1949, the DKBL had applied for a tax rebate for exported coal and in December, the finance minister of NRW agreed to a rebate of 38.5 Million DM with the proviso that the mines devote it exclusively to miners' housing. Discussions about the degree of additional support that could be expected from the Land stretched over the following months because of uncertainty about the amount of the tax rebate that would be spent on public utility housing. The Land wished to encourage the mines not to devote their funds exclusively to mine-owned properties; the profitable mines were in any case inclined not to concentrate on *Werkswohnungsbau*, because the new tax law favoured those companies which sponsored public utility - rather than company - housing. On the other hand, the DKBL pointed out that there were many company houses in need of repair or rebuilding and in February 1950, the NRW finally agreed that if the mines were to devote more than 50% of the tax rebate to public utility housing, the Land would put up an equal amount for repair of company properties. The DKBL was now invited to draw up a programme based on the available finance which it did at the beginning of April. At that time the First Federal Housing Law was due to come into operation in a few weeks and the mines were keen to begin building before it did so as to avoid being bound by its provisions, particularly the rule that the link between employment contract and tenancy in company housing should expire after the tenant had been in the house for five years. This pressure explains why the WAM hastily approved the DKBL's programme, only afterwards discovering that the plan would involve the Ministry in considerably more spending than originally anticipated. Originally, NRW had expected its contribution would be around 17 million DM. Now it appeared that it would be 66-68 million DM. In May, NRW agreed to advance an initial 26 million but said that Federal aid of at least the same level as the previous year should be forthcoming. Until it was, NRW refused to advance more cash.

² 2.Gesetz zur vorläufigen Neuordnung von Steuern.

³ L.Falk & W.Blümich (eds), *Einkommenssteuergesetz. Kommentar*, Munich 1982, Introduction; Abelshäuser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.74.

⁴ WWA F35,3522, DKBL, Circular to Nr.Cj 43 mining companies, 31.8.1949, Annex: Vorläufiges Merkblatt über die steuerliche Behandlung des Wohnungsbaues.

Krupp mines in Essen, the tax incentives meant that from the 5,000 DM put up by employers for each new apartment, they had to pay effectively only 1,500 DM. (For the many mines which were only breaking even or running at a loss, however, §7c was a poor substitute for the missing state subsidies.)¹ Finally, in 1951 there was a change again, as the Americans' new drive for coal led to a large injection of resources from the ECA, for which both NRW and the Insurance Funds provided additional capital. Thus by dint of normal social housing support, a little refugee aid, tax relief and US help, mining had been enabled to make sizeable advances in the housing programme.

Housing progress, 1948-51

The SVR plan 'Ruhr 48/52' had envisaged a total outlay of around 1,400 million DM between the currency reform and the end of the plan in September 1952.² Although, for reasons explored below, the SVR plan had become increasingly notional, it does at least provide a useful yardstick with which to evaluate progress. By the end of 1951, i.e., nine months before the planned completion date, total expenditure lay at around 720 million DM. This was more favourable in relation to the original plan than appears at first sight because building costs had fallen by over 10 percent during the 1948-51 period.³

If the SVR's building figures are taken as reasonably accurate, some 66,000 houses had been repaired and a further 46,000 re- or newly built by the end of 1951. This was just under two thirds of the 173,000 dwelling units planned to be completed by the end of summer 1952.⁴ In terms of new and reconstruction, the

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 21574, 'Finanzielle Opfer der Fried. Krupp Bergwerke Essen im Wohnungsbau seit dem Währungsstichtag', 3.7.1953; B102, 4391, Kost to Erhard, 4.7.1951.

² HStad NW73,47, Director, SVR, Draft of 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm Ruhr 47/52', 30.3.1948.

³ Lübcke, *Die Subventionierung des Wohnungsbaues*, p.54.

⁴ A comparison in summer 1952 itself is not possible as the SVR plan figures were abandoned at the end of 1951 in favour of the DKBL's statistics.

plan had actually already been exceeded. Progress in repairs was less favourable than the statistics suggest because many more lightly damaged houses and far fewer heavily damaged properties had been repaired than was originally envisaged. The amount of dwelling space created through repairs was probably only about one third of plan levels.¹ This was offset by the increasingly good progress of new building so that, all told, between one half and two thirds of the additional living space originally envisaged had been created.² This was far from being a disaster. In effect, the depreciation allowances of §7c had at least partly compensated for the fact that public subsidies were lower than originally anticipated.

Nevertheless, achievements were not only well short of plan targets and but even further short of the workforce's needs. The SVR plan itself proved an increasingly inadequate guide to the miners' true requirements. This was because of a discrepancy between the basis of the SVR's calculations and the way housing was actually allocated. The SVR had calculated its building targets by estimating not the number of apartments required but instead the amount of living space that needed to be rendered inhabitable.³ It had set out a modest ratio of dwelling space to occupants as the basis for its calculations and had then worked out how much dwelling space would be needed to house the Ruhr workforce as a whole.⁴ Yet when it came to repairing houses in practice, these notional averages had little meaning. There is no record that, when houses were repaired, the existing occupants were then forced to take on lodgers or vacate rooms simply because, according to SVR norms, they were occupying too

¹ Author's estimate based on the original plan figures and statistics for the 2nd quarter of 1951 showing the typical dwelling space gained through different categories of repairs. See SVR report for 2nd quarter 1951, appendix 1.

² Estimated as above and bearing in mind that a proportion of the new building was actually created through subdividing existing apartments.

³ HStad NW73, 47, Director of SVR, Draft paper, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', 30.3.1948.

⁴ Ibid.

much living space. It was understandable that this was so, but it meant that the SVR plan was inadequate to meet the workforce's needs. At the end of 1949, therefore, the DKBL produced its own estimates of housing requirements and these were increasingly used as the basis of the housing programmes.¹

We do not know how many miners were seeking accommodation at the time the SVR's plan was drawn up. But we do know that at the end of 1949 the DKBL believed there to be around 57,000 miners in the Ruhr who were separated from their families, a further 3,500 families in emergency accommodation and 10,000 more in cramped conditions.² In addition, extra housing was needed to compensate for the expected retirement of a fairly large number of miners (whose housing would thus be lost to the active labour force for a while), for general ageing and decay of part of the mines' housing stock and to meet the needs of married men who would be hired over the next couple of years as part of the mines' expansion programme. In all, the demand at the beginning of 1950 was for 112,379 dwelling units over the next two years, relatively few of which could be supplied by repairs to partially damaged property.³ Yet between then and the beginning of 1952, only 31,000 houses were newly constructed and a further 2,800 heavily damaged houses repaired. Again, a number of the former were rather temporary affairs, created by subdividing existing accommodation or by attic conversions. On this basis it can be estimated that the housing programme up to 1951 provided a permanent good quality house or apartment to less than half those on the housing lists. Since the established miners tended to come first, it is not surprising that the reminiscences of former new miners

¹ See DKBL, (ed.), *Überblick über den Umfang, die bisherige Abwicklung und die weitere Durchführung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaues*, Essen 1950.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

suggest only a small proportion of the newcomers had obtained a decent apartment by the end of 1951.¹

Housing and workforce regeneration

How important was the slow pace of building? A later chapter will look in more detail at the link between housing and workforce stability. There was no doubt that many of those who left the mines would not have done so if provided with decent accommodation. Workforce stability and productivity would therefore have benefited. Because of the housing shortages, the mines were unwilling to hire married men,² and the single men they did take on proved to be a highly mobile source of labour. The result was that many mines found themselves caught up in a vicious circle of recruitment and wastage from which they could not escape throughout the 1950's.³

In addition, there were a limited number of years after the currency reform when many people not normally inclined to occupational mobility, and certainly not inclined to making a sideways jump into the mines, were looking for an occupational and physical home and were prepared to settle somewhere unfamiliar for the sake of striking roots.⁴ These included many married men who had come to the mines before 1948 for the Care Packets and were now

¹ In the Hibernia mine Shamrock 3/4, for instance, 65% of those who had received housing up to the end of 1951 were members of the established workforce, despite the fact that new miners made up 70% of the workforce! See BBA 32, 3055, Minutes of Belegschaftsausschuß Meeting, 3.10.1951. The new miner Helmut Berger began working in the pits in 1947 and obtained his first decent house only in 1953. Despite the six year delay he believed himself lucky to have gained it then. See Helmut Berger, *Der Pütt hat mich ausgespuckt. Ein Ruhrkumpel erzählt aus seinem Leben*, Oberhausen 1981, p.110ff.

² StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund 46, ABB, Circulars, 19.2.1949 and 7.11.1949.

³ A detailed analysis of this vicious circle (in which mines with a high demand for labour were forced to take on men who were unlikely to stay, thus engendering further wastage, continued high demand and so on) is given in Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt University, 'Die subjektiven und objektiven Abkehrgründe bei sieben Zechen des westdeutschen Steinkohlenbergbaues in ihrer Auswirkung auf die Sicherung des Belegschaftsstandes unter Tage', mimeographed Ms. Frankfurt 1955, *passim* and esp. p.230-1.

⁴ For statistical proof of this, see chapter 7, p.335ff.

wondering whether to stay. What made them willing to embrace a long-term career in the mines was the double legacy of the currency reform: on the one hand, economic conditions seemed at least to be normalising, so that one could think on a more long-term basis; on the other, unemployment was on the increase and it looked to many people as if they would not find employment in their chosen profession. Ullrich, the most senior official in the DKBL manpower department and a shrewd and realistic observer of the manpower situation, wrote in early 1949 that if good housing were not available to replace the Care Packets, the refugee new miners would quit the industry. 'Der Bergbau würde damit gerade den Teil seiner Neubergleute verlieren, bei dem sein Bestreben eine bodenständige Belegschaft zu gewinnen, die beste Aussicht auf Erfolg bietet'.¹ By the mid-1950's, when ample housing *was* finally available in the mines, many of the 'unwillingly mobile' had found their occupational home elsewhere. Those people who were coming on to the labour market in the 1950's did so in a climate of rapidly diminishing unemployment and expanding opportunities. By 1953, the mines' attempts to recruit refugees from the 'refugee Länder', for example, were running into difficulties for lack of willing candidates.² Recruits tended to view mining work as a stop-gap measure or as a stepping stone to something better.

It is of course hard to say whether scarce capital would have been better employed in investment in miners' housing than it was elsewhere. It is, after all, possible that the productivity and other advantages accruing to the mining industry would have been outweighed by the opportunity costs to other sectors of

¹ Ges. Verb. File 'SBZ Flüchtlinge Arb 130.30-132.15', copy of memo from Ullrich, 'Beitrag des Ruhrbergbaus zur Lösung des Flüchtlingsproblems', 4.3.1949.

² See eg. BAK-ZwSt.H B102,21395, BWIM to Ehmke, BAM, 31.10.1952 which talks of Hibernia's problems in finding occupants for refugee housing and HStad NW10,32, WAM, Memo, 15.9.52 [sic! it should be 1953] which, in a neat reversal of the post-1948 situation, complained that in the refugee relocation programme from Schleswig-Holstein 'die Anwerbungsmaßnahmen der Landesarbeitsämter mit dem Baufortschritt nicht Schritt halten können'.

the economy. What the previous remarks do suggest, however, is that it would have been a lot more profitable investing in a big housing programme in 1948, than it was to be in 1952. It was an expensive delay.

Apprentices' hostels

Because of the importance attributed to them by the employers, it is worth noting that the construction of apprentices' hostels, as indeed of all types of hostel building, was also held up for lack of finance. Prior to the currency reform, a number of mining companies had been hard at work making existing camps and hostels suitable for apprentices. In 1945 there had been only three apprentice hostels in the Ruhr but by the end of 1947 there were already 25 with a total of 1359 places.¹ Here too, the currency reform retarded progress (though the availability of hitherto scarce supplies did at least ensure that the hostels' standard of fittings, furnishings and equipment rapidly improved) so that in July 1949 the number had risen to only 29.² The specific financial problem for hostels was they did not qualify for NRW housing grants, and in 1948-9 the only public funding received was some very limited support from the NRW Social Ministry.³

The change of fortunes came somewhat earlier than for the rest of the housing programme when, as a result of the DKBL's and particularly the BWIM's endeavours, the HAFSH agreed in 1950 to provide five million DM out of refugee money towards the cost of building additional hostels.⁴ The breakthrough

¹ Hans-Georg Erzmonett, 'Was tut der Ruhrbergbau für seinen Nachwuchs?', *Bergbau*, 1956, 7, pp.168-175, here p.172; OBADA 16303/3163/47, GMSO to OBAD, 28.11.1947.

² Erzmonett, 'Was tut der Ruhrbergbau', p.172.

³ Ges. Verb File '240.0-242.0 (Jugendpläne) (ab 1954)', DKBL to BWIM, 11.2.1954. In 1948 and 1949 the Social Ministry support amounted to 36,500 DM, which was so small it was presumably meant for cultural and welfare policies alone.

⁴ Around 4.5 million was for apprentice hostels and half a million for *Knappen*. BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33189, HAFSH table, 31.3.1951 and report from Imhäuser (BWIM IIIA3) to Min.Dgt Classen, 30.5.1951.

came soon after the Korean War began and, as with the later housing law, the BWiM's new willingness to give the mines support was a key factor behind obtaining the loan. Apart from the growing willingness to transfer resources to heavy industry, the HAFSH's involvement in hostel funding was the result of a marriage of interests which did not apply to housing, or at least not to the same extent. As part of its integration and compensation programme, the state was very keen to see young refugees offered the chance to gain an apprenticeship (a point that will be developed in the next chapter).¹

Whatever the motives behind it, the new state support transformed the situation. Between 1948 and 1950, the DKBL had received less than 60,000 DM in public grants for all youth hostels. In the next three years it obtained from refugee funds a total of 5,478,820 DM for apprentices and a further 1,303,350 DM for the Knappen.² An additional 10 million DM of slightly higher interest loans was made available by the BWiM within the framework of the German Youth Plan.³ By 1954, there were no less than 118 apprentices' hostels in the Ruhr and a further 24 youth villages.⁴

As with housing, the state support could easily have been given earlier, namely directly after the currency reform, when the mines' financial plight was at its greatest. At a time when the mining industry had no serious competitors on the labour market, its capacity to take on outside apprentices was severely limited. However, the costs of the delay were probably less serious than for adult housing. In April 1949 there had in fact been few school leavers to take on, because several Länder introduced in that year a 9th school class in order to limit youth

¹ See chapter 6, p.276ff.

² Ges.Verb. File '240.0-242.0 (Jugendpläne) (ab 1954)', DKBL to BWiM, 11.2.1954.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B102-21574, BWiM IIIA3f to NRW Arbeitsministerium, 14.1.1954. The Youth Plan funds from which the mines were supported were generally used to help finance apprenticeship places. Since, in mining, this was not necessary, the mines received the help to build hostels instead.

⁴ On these villages see chapter 8, p.399ff.

unemployment.¹ The biggest opportunity to win recruits from outside the ranks of the mining community came in the 1950-55 period, when the number of school leavers was at its highest² and when the mines were increasingly well placed to respond.

2: Fixed prices and free markets. The coal price, the miner's wage and the labour market in the 1950's

The inability to compete

The capital transfers of 1951 and 1952 created all the investment capital the mines needed. It was true that the money was less effective than it would have been had it been made available in, say, 1948, but for all that, acute shortages of investment capital were now a thing of the past. What the gentlemen in the Economics Ministry had *not* banished for ever, however, was the discrepancy between the coal price and coal's true value. After all, the investment funds transferred to the mines in 1951-52 had been generated either (in the case of capital for technical modernisation) through a special, one-off industrial levy or (in the case of housing) through a tax whose proceeds were tied strictly to housing uses. The coal price itself remained fixed and thus the mining industry had not been granted any greater powers to determine its own revenues than before.³

This position was not changed by the admission of the FRG into the European Community for Coal and Steel (EGKS) in 1952. True, it was the EGKS's avowed policy to achieve gradual price normalisation and Germany's entry was preceded

¹ OBADA I6301/856/50, IGBE Hauptverwaltung to OBAD, 19.11.1949.

² UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1958 - 1960*, p.30.

³ Indeed in 1950 the Allies had actually lowered the export price, bringing it further than ever from its true value price. See Bahl, *Staatliche Politik*, p.73.

by a sizeable price increase for Ruhr coal.¹ Nevertheless, both the EGKS and in particular the BWiM remained committed to cheap energy. Because of the German government's fear that higher priced coal would unleash an upward price spiral, German coal remained the cheapest in the Community.²

Initially, this loss of potential revenue did not have a major impact on the industry. Capital investment was after all taken care of through the IHG. And until 1953 or so, the mines were able to foot the wages bill without too many problems. During the Korea crisis the mines had been granted a new split price arrangement to allow them to offer some hefty wage increases. Then a two-year period had elapsed³ during which the industry was able to get by without making any wage increases at all (although an ill-fated bonus scheme in 1952 did temporarily augment the collieries' wages bill).⁴

However, wastage grew progressively more serious during this period and the industry found itself under pressure to make wage rises it was ill-placed to afford. There were pay increases in both 1953 and 1954 and in addition a steady growth in welfare expenditure of one sort or another. New inducements were offered to potential recruits. Charges for the first months' board and lodgings in mining hostels were now generally suspended and often waived altogether.⁵ Despite rising costs, hostel charges barely increased and became one of the biggest items in the mines' social budget.

These inducements were unable to prevent the mines from falling behind the wage offers of the competition, particularly the iron and steel industry.⁶ For,

¹ Ibid., pp.73-4.

² UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1955-1957*, p.34.

³ From spring 1951-April 1953.

⁴ EGKS (ed.), *Entwicklung der Löhne und die Lohnpolitik in den Industrien der Gemeinschaft 1945 - 1956*, Luxemburg 1960, Section on Germany, p.16ff.

⁵ OBADA I8007/520/55, ABB, Annual Report 1954.

⁶ EGKS (ed.), *Entwicklung der Löhne*, pp.26-27.

hard coal mining suffered from two key disadvantages. On the one hand, it enjoyed annual productivity increases of only 3 percent, whereas its competitors saw their productivity go up in some cases by as much as 15 percent a year.¹ On the other hand, the share of total production value accounted for by wage costs (in German parlance, *Lohnquote*) was more than three times as high in mining as in iron and steel and indeed in most of mining's major industrial competitors on the labour market.² In early 1952, average male earnings in iron and steel surpassed that in the pits and was to stay ahead for the following four years.³ This was by no means the only reason for the collieries' labour losses and a great many former miners actually chose to move to employment which offered lower pay. The fact remains, however, that wage offers in other sectors put the collieries under increasing pressure, while price controls prevented them from responding.

The crisis of 1955 and state support

The crisis point came in 1955. The mines had been sparing in their recruitment during the previous year because demand for coal had been poor. During 1954 overall workforce size had fallen considerably.⁴ Now, with demand for coal booming, the collieries were desperately trying to restore the number of face workers. Yet in the January-March period, despite a heavy frost which limited the building trade's competition on the labour market, despite 37 special recruitment campaigns in three months and despite the employers' willingness to take on applicants who would previously not have got past the colliery gates, the mines obtained less than half the men they required.⁵ It was

¹ UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1955-1957*, p.53.

² *Ibid.*, p.33 facing.

³ *Ibid.*, p.60 facing.

⁴ See table 16, p.328.

⁵ Calculated from OBADA I8007/1310/55, ABB quarterly report 1.1.-31.3.1955.

a sign of the struggle for labour that the employers' solidarity began to break down. Companies vied with each other for recruits, some offering three months free lodging rather than the one month laid down in joint guidelines, others subsidising the costs of moving house and some recruiting in areas reserved for other mines.¹ In an effort to stem the rising tide of inducements and subsidies, the UVR repeatedly urged the collieries to observe greater discipline.²

Seizing the initiative, the IGB demanded a large wage increase to reduce wastage and improve recruitment. To underline the point, it balloted its members for strike action. The employers' response was that they simply could not afford it.³ On top of mining's general inability to keep up with iron and steel, the minor recession of 1953-1954 meant that in 1955 the mines were looking to improve their margins.⁴ In other words, the IGB's demands could be financed only by a substantial price increase - something that did not lie within the employers' control. The onus lay on the Federal government and the EGKS.

Mining thus found itself in a similar position to the 1948-1951 period. Then as now, the controlled coal price deprived it of the resources it needed. Whereas prior to 1951 the major problem had been finding capital for investment, mining's main difficulty now was footing the wage bill. And in 1955, just as five years earlier, there was little doubt that the government would have to give support. If it did not do so, German industry would be forced to turn to imported coal or alternative energy sources, thus adding more to its energy bill than would the very coal price increase the government was trying to avoid. So, despite

¹ Ges.Verband. File '300-30.1 Ausbildung von Neubergleuten', Memo, 8.1.1955, concerning telephone call from Dr.Köker; Hibernia to UVR, 14.12.1954; Memo, 12.7.1955, signed Ullrich. Hibernia (for whom Dr.Köker worked), was particularly alarmed because of the danger that its own mines would end up competing with each other, thus driving its costs up astronomically.

² Ges.Verband. File '300-30.1 Ausbildung von Neubergleuten', UVR, Circular No.16 to mining companies and collieries, 15.2.1955; Ullrich to Stein, 14.7.1955.

³ EGKS (ed.), *Entwicklung der Löhne*, pp.26-27.

⁴ UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1955-1957*, p.34.

their reluctance, both EGKS and Federal Government agreed to modest increases in the price of German coal.¹

Any illusions that the mines' problems might, even temporarily, have been solved by these modest measures were shattered within weeks. The 9 1/2 percent wage rise that the employers felt able to offer should theoretically have brought mining to the top of the earnings scale, but in practice the iron and steel industry and the construction industry continued to outbid the mines.² This was partly because the collieries did not pay out the full increase to contract wage earners - the wage scissors effect was particularly noticeable this time round - and also because of steady increases in the wages of minings' competitors.³ In the April-June period, the colliery workforces actually fell by over 5,000 men. Daily production always dropped in the summer months, but the fall in 1955 was the biggest since the currency reform.⁴

The pressure was on the state to offer more substantial relief. Beginning in March 1956,⁵ the NRW government introduced a temporary incentives scheme for miners, pending the conclusion of a Federal scheme. The Federal measure came into effect at the end of the year. Under the Miners' Bonus Scheme, as it was called, contract wage earners received DM 2,50 per shift, tax free, on top of their normal earnings. Shift workers received a bonus of DM 1,25.⁶ Coupled with a number of other measures introduced at the same time, this was a major

¹ EGKS (ed.), *Entwicklung der Löhne*, pp.26-27.

² Ie, though minings' official wage rate lay above those of the building workers, the ABB found in summer 1955 that the construction industry was in fact offering better rates than contract wage earners could expect to earn and in addition more generous separation allowances for migrant workers. - see OBADA I8007/2142/55, ABB quarterly report 1.4-30.6.1955.

³ IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1955*, p.78ff.

⁴ Workforce figure is underground only. ABB quarterly report 1.4-30.6.1955; ZdKW 34, p.3.

⁵ Though backdated to February.

⁶ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33133, UVR, Circular No.29 to mining companies and collieries, 10.3.1956, annex; UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1955-7*, p.56.

financial commitment on the part of the state. As a result, recruitment increased by almost one quarter over the previous year, while wastage barely rose. By the end of 1956 the underground workforce had attained and narrowly surpassed the size it had reached prior to the 1954 recession.¹

The true price for coal

One of the problems in assessing how far the controlled coal price deprived the mines of resources they could legitimately have expected is that it is hard to say at any time what coal's 'true' value was.² Certainly, if there had been no price controls, the Ruhr could have sold its coal for more than it actually received. But since there was no competition within the Ruhr, the price which the industry could have extorted from its customers would, as Ludwig Erhard knew,³ have been a monopoly price, overstating coal's value to the economy. Another source of uncertainty in any calculation is that world energy prices fluctuated considerably. For a brief period in 1954, for example, American coal reached German shores at considerably less than the Ruhr's prices.⁴ During the Suez crisis, however, US costs lay far above the Ruhr's. Thus it is hard to estimate how much potential (non-monopolistic) revenue was withheld from the mines.

It seems reasonably certain, nevertheless, that in the years preceding the introduction of the Miners' Bonus Scheme the mines could have earned significantly more than they did, even if one discounts the monopoly profits to be earned through the absence of internal competition. Workforce regeneration suffered as a result and employers were, both in 1948-51 and 1953-55, hampered in their attempts to rebuild the workforce.

¹ See table 16, p.328.

² The debates surrounding the 1983-1984 miners' strike in Britain show that this continues to be a problem.

³ Abelshauser, 'Kohle und Marktwirtschaft', p.496.

⁴ Bahl, *Staatliche Politik*, p.78.

Whether it was to the national advantage that this was so is a different question and can not be answered here. The main argument for holding the price down was not very convincing since by the 1950's coal's inflationary potential was probably very limited.¹ The government may well have been over-cautious. On the other hand, cautious monetarism seems to have stood the Federal Republic in good stead over the years. It may be that the general emphasis on price stability, of which the approach to coal was a symptom, was beneficial to economic growth. Whatever the case, the fact is that the industry's attempts to achieve a stable workforce were rendered more difficult by government policy.

Price normalisation and the end of the post-war coal boom

As a result of the Bonus Scheme and associated measures recruitment picked up and the mines found themselves for a while in 'einer befriedigenden Assiette', as the UVR itself acknowledged.² Yet within months, the industry found itself faced with labour problems again. Even in 1956, wastage was higher than adult intake and the workforce grew only because of the large number of apprentices being transferred below ground. Since apprentice rolls were falling rapidly, these transfers would soon begin to diminish. In 1957, though earnings in mining continued to remain above those in iron and steel,³ wastage was more than 10 percent higher than recruitment.⁴ Production actually fell.⁵ These were clear signs that, even allowing for heavier use of foreign labour in future,⁶ a major wage increase was needed.

¹ See for instance the comments of Walter Tengelmann and Heinrich Kost in Abelshausen, 'Kohle und Marktwirtschaft', p.517 & p.522.

² Comment by Werner Söhngen at an extraordinary UVR meeting with Ludwig Erhard in *Ibid.*, p.504.

³ UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1955-1957*, p.60 facing.

⁴ See table 16, p.315.

⁵ *ZdKW*, 39, pp.4-5; UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1955-1957*, pp.64-65.

⁶ See chapter 7, p.350ff.

In one way, therefore, the situation in 1957 was merely a revival of the problems that had been temporarily alleviated by the Bonus Scheme. Once again, the mines found it impossible to generate the resources necessary to consolidate workforce growth. Once again, production targets were threatened by labour shortages. And, as before, the mines were prevented from increasing the coal price. In April 1956, it is true, the EGKS removed controls on coal prices but, through a sort of gentlemen's agreement between UVR and Erhard, informal controls persisted in the FRG until October 1957.¹

On another plane, however, the nature of the problem was gradually changing, although it is impossible to say exactly when this occurred. It was ceasing to be 'government-induced' and becoming a sign that coal was too expensive to mine. The gap between the Ruhr's tariffs and those of its competitors began to decrease as a result of underlying changes in world energy supply. Between 1956 and 1960, mineral oil prices fell by 50 percent, as the international oil companies struggled to increase their market share in Europe. American coal, which during the Suez crisis had been expensive to ship, fell in price by around 14 percent from 1957-60.² It is true that there were distortions in the world market and that the mines were subject to some unfair restrictions,³ but the fact was that the Ruhr faced ever stiffer competition. At the same time, the Ruhr's own production costs were rising and it was clear in 1957 that wages would soon have to rise even further. Increases in child benefit and employer payments to the social insurance schemes only added to the industry's costs and many mines which had made a profit in 1956 were in the red a year later.⁴ In other words, the Ruhr's long-term competitiveness problem - apparent in the 1920's but then

¹ Bahl, *Staatliche Politik*, p.81; Abelshausen, 'Kohle und Marktwirtschaft', p.491ff.

² UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1958-1960*, p.18.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.19-20.

⁴ Abelshausen, 'Kohle und Marktwirtschaft', p.491 & p.509.

suppressed by the autarchy drive, war and reconstruction - was beginning to reemerge.

The point was not that the mines had in 1957 lost their market. On the contrary, controlled prices ensured that they were still cheaper than the competition. But, had the mines charged a genuine price that would have given them a full profit margin and allowed them to pay an attractive wage, they would have found alternative sources of energy making rapid inroads into the German market. Germany's balance of payments could now comfortably absorb the costs of sizeable energy imports so that oil as well as coal from America, Russia and Poland would have been able to compete successfully against realistically priced German coal.¹ The more efficient mines would have been able to cope with this but not the Ruhr industry as a whole. Government pricing policy was therefore in a way protecting the mines. It reduced their revenue but shielded them from competition.

The real cost of price controls in the period 1956-1958 may well have been that they blinded the industry to the changing shape of the energy market. The mines were in a sort of limbo. The official coal price was still less than coal's value on the market; on the other hand, the price the market would support was sinking below the point at which the less efficient mines could make a profit. Yet the industry did not see this. Because they could *not* charge a realistic price and were being forced to sell cheap, the employers were protected from the knowledge of their declining competitiveness. So, output and workforce targets remained as before and no attempt was made to remove the marginal pits from production. The transformation from coal shortages to a coal glut at the

¹ See tables in UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1955-1957*, p.8, and facing.

beginning of 1958 came as a complete surprise (though not, interestingly enough, to the IGB).¹

It was only in the early months of 1958, that the new realities of the energy market became apparent to all. So confident had the employers been of Ruhr coal's continuing competitiveness that in October 1957 they had broken from the gentlemen's agreement and imposed a hefty price increase.² Within a few weeks, coal began stock-piling in the Ruhr. The effects on demand of the price rise itself had been exacerbated by a temporary down-turn in iron and steel production and even more by the end of the Suez crisis. The Suez canal had become navigable again and American coal was able for the first time to exploit recent cost improvements in shipping. Suddenly, American coal was on the German market at a price close to home production.³ Another problem for the Ruhr producers was that many German coal consumers had committed themselves to long consumer agreements with American exporters. The Ruhr here suffered from the EGKS policy which had forced them to export a considerable proportion of their coal in the 1955-1957 period even though the German market was undersupplied. Now that the domestic market's demands had fallen, the German coal producers found many potential customers contractually tied to US suppliers.⁴

From spring 1958 onwards, mining's main problem was not where to obtain new labour and how to retain it, but how to reduce the workforce in response to the shrinking demand for coal. The mining industry's 'reconstruction conjuncture' had, almost overnight, come to an end.

¹ Bahl, *Staatliche Politik*, p.82.

² Bahl, *Staatliche Politik*, p.81; Abelshauser, 'Kohle und Marktwirtschaft', *passim*.

³ Abelshauser, *Ruhrkohlenbergbau*, p.89ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Resources and regeneration, 1948-58

The essence of this chapter has been that in the years between currency reform and coal crisis the mines were for the most part faced by a tricky combination of high demand for coal on the one hand and a shortage of resources on the other. Initially this was because they were held back by the government. Towards the end it revealed that demand was being kept artificially high by low prices. Such a situation naturally made any attempt to rebuild the workforce more difficult. Yet the lack of funds was, for much of the time at least, not so pressing or constraining as to preclude the formulation of a coherent regeneration strategy or to deny the mines any chance of building a stable and productive workforce. It was simply the difficult and sometimes confining framework within which managers and other interested groups had to operate.

Rebuilding the workforce was after all not simply a question of providing resources. In the first place, high wages alone would not suffice to create workforce stability. Many of the key barriers to the integration of new labour had nothing to do with money. In fact, it will be seen that the mines' vulnerability in relation to the wages offered in the steel mills was as much the result as the cause of the failure to integrate the newcomers. Secondly, many dimensions of new labour policy were determined not by the level of resources available but by the goals, aspirations and interests of the groups involved in formulating policy. It is therefore time to look in more detail at the goals and strategies which shaped workforce regeneration in the social market economy. This is the task of the following four chapters.

Chapter 6: The reluctant elite. 'Stammesbildung' and the apprentices, 1948-58

Rebuilding the workforce in changed economic conditions

In spring and summer 1948, the rapid changes in the economic and financial situation allowed the employers to impose their wishes in place of the Allies' former policies. In the first place, the Coal Control Group accepted that the mines' most pressing goal now was to reduce their operating costs. As financial reserves became tighter, it was clear that the industry could no longer allow itself the luxury of producing coal no matter what the cost. Above all, labour productivity needed to be increased. Whereas in the peak year of 1936, miners underground were bringing 2,199 kg of clean coal to the surface and 1,970 kg in 1938, output per man/shift ten years later lay at just 1,286 kilogramms.¹ Just how committed the industry was to attaining rapid improvements in efficiency was made clear by the DKBL's five year production programme (Plan A), which envisaged a 56 percent increase in production on the basis of only 7 percent growth in the workforce.² Underground output/man/shift was supposed to rise from its 1948 level of just over 1,200kg to 1,850kg in 1953.³

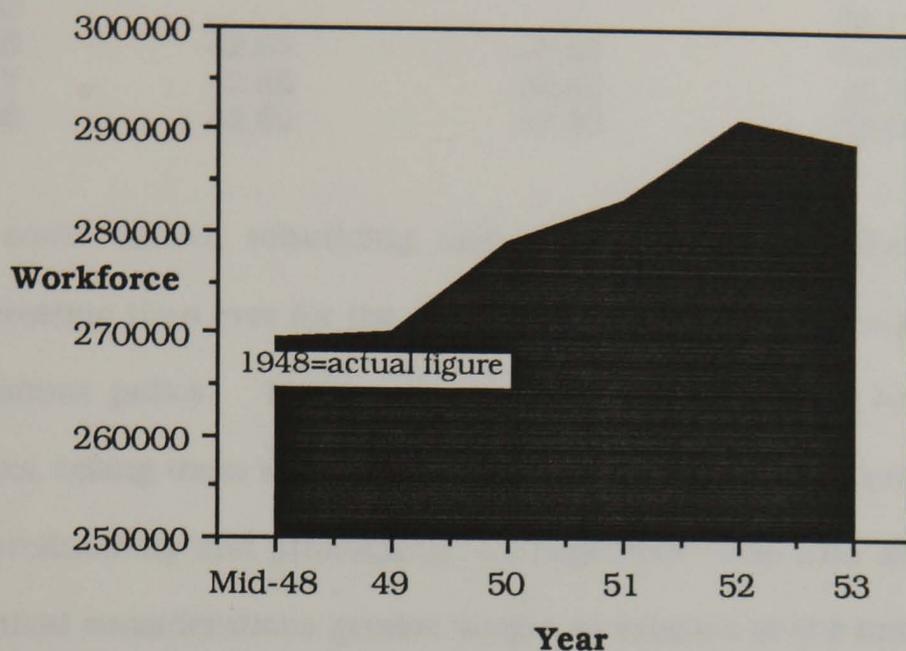
Secondly, currency stabilisation and the normalisation of market conditions convinced both Allies and management that the time had come to think more seriously about long-term investment. It was evident that a whole packet of measures such as sinking new shafts, expanding preparatory and development work, mechanising production and so on were required.⁴

¹ *ZdKW*, 12, p.54.

² Calculated from BAK (OMGUS) BICO COALCO 17/8186/30, DKBL to J.Chairmen US/UKCCG, 2.11.1948 and attached Plan A figures.

³ DKBL (ed.), *Entwicklung des Kohlenbergbaus in den Vereinigten Zonen (Plan A)*, Essen 1948.

⁴ Abelshauser, *Ruhrkohlenbergbau*, p.66ff.

Fig 4: Planned workforce growth - underground only (Plan A)¹

The new emphasis on capital expenditure and efficiency made it inevitable that the employers would not give workforce expansion the same priority as had the Allies before 1948. Nevertheless, the recruitment and integration of new labour continued to be accorded considerable significance. In the first place, Plan A foresaw hiring some 20,000 additional miners by 1953. Secondly, rejuvenation was recognised to be vital for improving efficiency.² Despite the massive recruitment since 1945, the workforce was still very much overaged. Indeed, the average age of the Hauer was actually higher in 1948 than it had been at the end of the war (see table 11). A sizeable influx of young labour was necessary to solve this problem. Finally, the employers were well aware that considerable effort and attention was required to turn the newcomers already in the mines into permanent and productive additions to the workforce.

¹ Source: BAK (OMGUS) BICO COALCO 17/8186/30, Hard Coal Production, Plan A

² WWA S22 (OMGUS) BICO ERP SEC 11/95-2/3-4, DKBL paper 'Plan A', Essen 20.2.1948.

Table 11: Average age of male workers in Ruhr mining¹

<u>Year</u> ²	<u>Hewers</u>	<u>All underground</u>	<u>Overall</u>
1930			33.16
1946	42.64	40.21	40.61
1947	42.85	38.85	39.37
1948	42.82	37.83	38.54

To some extent, rebuilding and reshaping the workforce were now more interesting than ever for the employers, since they were at last in direct control of labour policy. Military Government was no longer breathing down their necks, telling them what to do. Thus, as well as strengthening the commitment to productivity and profitability, management could also allow social and even political considerations greater weight in relation to the immediate demands of increasing output.

Another factor which ensured that the employers had a relatively free hand was the favourable labour supply. Though the Points and IK-Marken lost most of their value soon after the currency reform, the modest but decent mining wage continued to prove a powerful attraction. This was not surprising given that unemployment rose steadily from June 1948 onwards, peaking at 12 percent in 1950.³ At the end of the 1948, the OBAD noted that there were more men asking for work in the pits than there were jobs to be had. A couple of months later, the stream of applicants at the colliery gates was still growing.⁴ For the time being at least, the mines could afford to be selective with regard to newcomers and firm towards the existing labour force.

¹ Source: OBAD (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1957*.

² As of 30 June of each year.

³ Abelshausen, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p.64.

⁴ OBADA I8010/386/49, Quarterly report 4th Q. 1948 & I8010/1238/49, Quarterly report 1st Q. 1949.

Revived interest in apprenticeships

How would the employers respond to this opportunity? They had already had plenty of time to outline their plans, since their lack of influence prior to 1948 had not precluded giving thought to the industry's longer-term needs. Proposals, ranging from formal documents on how to reorganise the industry down to mutterings in the *Kasino* about those terrible British,¹ were in the air almost from the start of the occupation. By the time the Bergassessoren were firmly back at the helm, there was, certainly as far as workforce regeneration is concerned, an informal Ruhr consensus, embracing employers, state administration and, on some questions, the unions, about what the priorities and strategies should be.

This informal consensus (whose main components will be explored in this and the following chapters) was quick to emerge and required little discussion because most of the policies were not new ones. The mines were after all no strangers to the problems associated with rapid workforce growth and the absorption of a large number of unskilled workers. A whole repertoire of tried and tested responses and remedies was at hand. Even more important, the employers had been discussing since the 1930's ways of regenerating the workforce and (as chapter 1 has already shown) a number of measures had already been outlined and discussed during the war.²

The policy which by 1948 enjoyed almost universal endorsement in the Ruhr was that of promoting apprentice recruitment and training while reducing adult recruitment and, indeed, ultimately removing it altogether. Almost from the first days after 1945, there had been calls for apprentice recruitment to be

¹ See chapter 'Neubergleute', in Breder, *Geschichten vor Ort*.

² See chapter 1, p.53.

expanded. In November 1945, just a few weeks after its creation, the GMSO sent the collieries a circular reminding them of mining's long-standing efforts to upgrade training within the industry and expressing the hope that the training programme would enhance the industry's status and the size and quality of its young intake.¹ Initially, adult recruitment had to be given priority, but by 1948 employers and unions were already talking of adult recruitment as a temporary stop-gap measure.²

What was the logic behind the call for more apprentices? Young labour was cheap, of course, and this was attractive to the mines on a number of counts. It meant that apprentices could be used to do menial jobs above ground, such as sorting coal at the picking belt.³ And it meant that the mines could afford to give them good training. Yet the financial argument should not be given too much weight. It was cheaper to take on youngsters as juvenile trainees (Bergjungleute) with their lower wage and more rudimentary training programme than as apprentices (Berglehrlinge). The fact that *apprentice* recruitment was given such priority proved that the wage costs were not the only, indeed not the main argument in their favour. In addition, apprentices in mining were extremely well paid in comparison with their counterparts in other industries, receiving 2 1/2 times as much as the average.⁴

Nor can the undoubted need for rejuvenation explain the specific stress on apprentices as opposed to juvenile trainees or, indeed, to young adults. The

¹ OBADA I6300, GMSO, Circular No. 138, November 1945, annex 2.

² Cf. the calls for the mines' reception camp in Bochum Hiltrop to be closed. BBA 32, 741, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, 30.1.1948.

³ IGBEA, Handakten Rudi Quast, File 'Arbeitskreis-Arbeitsdirektoren 1952 - 1956', Minutes of meeting of Essen/Gelsenkirchen district, 13.5.1954; Minutes of meeting of Recklinghausen district, 1.12.1954.

⁴ OBADA I8006/36/53, DKBL (ed.), *Berglehrlingshetme zur Behebung von Berufsnot und Arbeitslosigkeit unter den Jugendlichen*, Essen, [1953], table 'Gegenüberstellung der Erziehungsbeihilfen der Berglehrlinge und der Handwerkslehrlinge'.

latter would bring just as much youth and physical strength to the mines as the apprentices. Yet the preference given to apprentices over hiring young adults was virtually universal.¹ As Herr Mittelviehhaus, managing director of the Concordia mine argued to senior trade union members, the recruitment of even young adult trainees could only be a 'Notbehelf. Der Bergjungmann muß stets bevorzugt werden...'.²

A plausible explanation would seem to be that the apprentices' lengthy training made them more productive members of the workforce. Yet there was little evidence that this was so. It was true that the very inadequate training given to adult trainees made them more susceptible to accidents and less able to carry out difficult jobs like properly erecting supports after the coal had been mined.³ With their all-round training, apprentices were better placed to adapt to new conditions. But it was noteworthy that neither the mines nor the DKBL produced any statistics comparing the efficiency of former apprentices and adult trainees. Good evidence that the lengthy training period was not really necessary, at least from the point of view of the work itself, was that the mines were often hard put to it to find things for the apprentices to do.⁴ Indeed a number of mines tried, particularly in the early post-war period when training procedures were still rather in flux, to reduce the actual training period and to get the apprentices into production at a much earlier stage.⁵

¹ See, for instance, the ABB's comment on the mines' preferences, in 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.76.

² AZG File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung von Arbeitskräften aus anderen Bezirken', Memo concerning meeting of the NRW mines' Tarifausschuß, 28.1.1949. By Bergjungmann, Mittelviehhaus meant all juveniles and was not making a distinction between juvenile trainee (the Bergjungmann proper) and apprentice.

³ BBA 10, 135, Mine Friedrich d Große, Memo for Herrn Bergrat Heintzmann, 4.4.1955.

⁴ As is graphically manifest in Hans Dieter Baroth's autobiographical account of his apprentice years. See Baroth, *Aber es waren schöne Zeiten*, pp.117-126; pp.132-138.

⁵ See OBADA I6303/1004/46, BA Werden to OBAD, 10.7.1946.

Status and recruitment

As in the pre-war period, the real attraction of the apprenticeship was the hope it would alter both the miner's position in society and his perception of his own profession. The emphasis on the apprentices showed that, as far as labour policy was concerned, the employers continued to regard the attainment of workforce stability as the most intractable and important pre-requisite for long-term improvements in productivity and profitability.

The apprenticeship, so the theory ran, would persuade potential recruits and their parents of mining's status and worth and would thus solve mining's recruitment problems.¹ An early expression of this view came in October 1945. The LAA Westfalen-Lippe was faced with a Military Government instruction that, in order to ensure a good supply of youngsters to the mines, directions should be used if necessary.² The LAA agreed to issue directions to youngsters for one year, arguing that, in the immediate future:³

Es ist weder im Rahmen der Einzelberatung noch mit den Mitteln der bisher üblichen Werbemethoden möglich, die in den weitesten Kreisen der Jugend und deren Eltern bestehenden Vorurteile gegen den bergmännischen Beruf auszuräumen.

On the other hand, continued the LAA, '..steht zu erwarten, daß es erfahrenen und pädagogisch geschickten Kräften gelingen muß, im Rahmen einer längeren Ausbildungszeit diese Vorurteile zu überwinden'.⁴

Again and again, discussions about the apprenticeship were dominated by its 'public relations' aspect; considerations of status, not productivity prevailed.

¹ See, 'Das Nachwuchsproblem im Bergbau', *Bundesarbeitsblatt*, 1950, 9, pp.331-333, here p.332f; 'Zur Pflege bergmännischer berufsethischer Gesinnung', *Arbeitsblatt für die britische Zone*, 1947, 1, pp.259-262; 'Männer von Morgen', *Junior Magazin*, 1952, 12, pp.474-476.

² OBADA 16301/1339/45, LAA Westfalen-Lippe, Circular to labour exchanges No.165/45, 28.10.1945.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

In early post-war debates about the proper length of training, for example, the main difficulty was to find a balance between not over-qualifying the apprentice, on the one hand, and on the other not giving rise to the impression, 'daß die bergmännische Lehre im Vergleich mit anderen Lehrberufen minderwertig sei...'.¹ It was to avoid this impression that the OBAD strongly resisted any attempt to offer shorter training.²

The possibility of dramatically increasing labour intake by altering the profession's status seemed in 1947/8 larger than ever because in the next few years a very large number of youngsters would be leaving school for whom training opportunities would be limited.³ Indeed, until well into the 1950's, NRW was to be the only Land in West Germany with a surplus of apprenticeship places.⁴ Refugees, in particular, found themselves in the position of neither having the contacts to obtain scarce apprenticeships for their children, nor the money to pay for their upkeep were a traineeship offered. If such parents could be persuaded of the worth of mining training, they might well wish to avail themselves of the undoubtedly good earnings and possibilities for upward mobility in the mining industry.⁵ Thus the post-war situation presented the mines with a perhaps unique opportunity to achieve a large influx of new blood. It was a sign of the mines' determination to take advantage of the situation, that by the end of November 1947 there were already 25 apprentice hostels in the Ruhr with 1,359 places.⁶

¹ OBADA I6303/1004/46, BA Werden to OBAD, 10.7.1946.

² OBADA I6303/85/48, OBAD to AA Gelsenkirchen, 21.1.1948.

³ OBADA I6301/969/47, ABB, Circular to colliery managements and labour exchanges, 17.3.1947.

⁴ *Informations-Rundbrief zur sozialen Lage der Jugend*, 1952, 4, 12, p.12. (This was a semi-official journal, published in association with the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Jugendaufbauwerk, copies of which are preserved in HStAD NW45, 210).

⁵ OBADA I6301/927/46, LAA Westfalen-Lippe, Circular, signed Dr.Herwegen, 25.4.1946. At the beginning of 1947, refugees were already by far the biggest group amongst the mining apprentices hailing from outside the Ruhr. See OBADA I6301/969/47, ABB, Circular to colliery managements and labour exchanges, 17.3.1947.

⁶ OBADA I6303/3163/47, GMSO to OBAD, 28.11.1947.

At a fairly early stage, the drive to win apprentices from outside the Ruhr gained added impetus from the view that the outsiders, or at least a proportion of them, were of a particularly high quality. In part this was based on purely educational criteria. Within the Ruhr region, school-leavers with good results tended to avoid the mines and go into more desirable trades. But outside the Ruhr, the mines faced little competition on the juvenile labour market. In the 1949-1952 period, between one third and two fifths of inter-regional apprentice movements were accounted for by the mines.¹ So it was not surprising that the collieries soon found they were able to obtain youngsters with very good school results. The outsiders' performance in the apprentice exams, particularly in the theoretical parts, was correspondingly better than the locals'.² In a 1949 report to the OBAD about the general development of training since the war, the DKBL took pains to note the refugee apprentices'³ 'besonders hervorstechende Beteiligung an der betrieblichen und schulischen Ausbildung'.⁴

However, the attraction of the outsiders went further than this. At the IGB's first youth conference, which took place in 1950, a miner with the memorable name of Roman Mrug stood up and complained at what he saw as the favouritism being given to youngsters from outside the Ruhr. What the employers were arguing, Mrug moaned, was that it was better to recruit youngsters:⁵

die aus ländlichen Gegenden kommen [i.e., from outside the Ruhr - MR], weil diese im allgemeinen ein weit höheres Niveau an den Tag legen, eine andere Erziehung hätten, zum anderen seien sie schulisch mehr auf der Höhe und es sei deshalb weit mehr mit ihnen anzufangen.

¹ *Informations-Rundbrief zur sozialen Lage der Jugend*, 1952, 4, 1, p.1ff.

² Manfred Daberkow, 'Die Seßhaftmachung der vom westdeutschen Steinkohlenbergbau aus bergfremden Gebieten angeworbenen Berglehrlinge'. (Examensarbeit, Sozialschule Gelsenkirchen, 1955), p.15.

³ The majority of hostel occupants were refugees. See below, p.282.

⁴ OBADA I6301/2448/49, DKBL to OBAD, 5.11.1949, annex: 'Stellungnahme zu dem von der Verwaltung fürWirtschaft erbetenen Bericht..'.
⁵ DGBA Protokoll-Sammlung, 'Protokoll des 1.Verbandsjugendtags der IGB', Bochum 1950.

Often from non-working class or small town backgrounds,¹ the outsiders were seen by the employers as bringing desirable values and attitudes to the mines. Above all, they would remove the low behaviour and negative attitudes which the culturally and racially inferior Poles² had brought in at the end of the 19th century. The Abb's Dr. Herwegen, for instance, observed that because of 'die Anlegung der in den meisten Fällen kulturell tiefer stehenden Personen von außen,...hat sich im Bergbau-Milieu ein Umgangston entwickelt, der vielen Arbeitwilligen als untragbar erscheint'. 'Geistig geeignete' outsiders could play a key role in introducing new standards of behaviour.³ There would thus be a virtuous circle whereby the status of a proper qualification would attract outsiders and the outsiders' standards and behaviour would, in turn, enhance mining's standing in the community.

The new elite and the miner of yore

The hopes attached to the apprentices from outside the Ruhr lead us on to the second part of the employers' vision. Alongside raising the miner's standing in the wider community, the apprenticeships were intended to increase his self-esteem. This in turn would strengthen the bond between the miner and his industry, thus reducing wastage, and improving industrial relations.⁴ At a

¹ HStAD NW41, 768, Sozialwissenschaftliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Erforschung von Jugendproblemen (ed.), 'Maßnahmen zur Behebung der Not der berufslosen und heimatlosen Jugend in NRW', (unpublished Ms., no date (1951)); Daberkow, 'Die Seßhaftmachung', p.50ff.

² One does not have to scratch very far beneath the surface in the post-war years to find this type of attitude. See, for instance, Edwin C. Abe and Alfons Echterhoff, *Das Vest - ein dynamischer Wirtschaftsraum. Die sozialwirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Struktur des Vestes Recklinghausen und seine wohnungs- und siedlungswirtschaftliche Problematik*, Recklinghausen 1955, p.55 and pp.93-4; see also the more cautious but similar account in the pseudo-sociological 'Schmelztiegel Kohlenpott', in DKBL (ed.), *Ruhr-Almanach. Vom Bergmann und Bergbau*, Cologne 1950, p.95ff.

³ HStAD NW41, 746, Minutes of a meeting of the 'Ausschuß zur Ausarbeitung eines Lehrganges für Heimleiter' on 16th December 1948, 27.12.1948.

⁴ It was the employers' aim, 'durch zielbewußte Werbung um die Jugend..eine Stammebelegschaft aufzubauen, die den Bergmannsberuf aus innerer Verbundenheit ausübt und im Kohlenrevier verwurzelt bleibt'. See 'Das Nachwuchsproblem im Bergbau', p.332; see also Hansgerd Friedhoff, 'Die Bedeutung der beruflichen Bildung für die Fluktuation im Ruhrbergbau', *Bergbau-Rundschau*, 1957, 9, 1, pp.48-50.

major conference of colliery training directors in 1953, Heinrich Kost, the DKBL's general director and one of the individuals most closely associated with promoting apprenticeships since the early 1940's, listed what he saw as the most important virtues of the traineeship. In first place, according to Kost, was not training's contribution to productivity but its potential for creating a stable workforce.¹ In addition, Kost believed the apprenticeship could have an important political function, namely protecting youngsters from the dangers of political radicalism.²

The hopes and expectations which the industry attached to the apprenticeship drew strongly on a romantic myth about what the miner had once been. In a 1948 article for the mining industry's journal, *Glückauf*, Karl Bax evoked this image when he wrote:³

Für die Berufe der Urproduktion reichen Kenntnisse und Fertigkeiten nicht aus. Bauer, Hochseefischer und Bergmann verdienen ein hartes Brot, und sie bedürfen einer besonderen Einstellung zum Leben: einer berufsständisch bestimmten Weltanschauung. Alle Urerzeugung ringt mit der Natur. Sie lauscht der Natur ihre Geheimnisse ab, wagt den Kampf mit ihren Gewalten.

The miner of yore was thus bound to his profession by deep inner ties to the earth and an almost mystical desire to unlock its secrets and bring its treasures to the surface.⁴ In addition, he was a man with a clearly defined social position. The works newspaper of the GBAG's Hamborn Group, for instance, bemoaned the passing of the 'in sich geschlossenen, harmonischen und von Berufsethos erfüllten Menschen' of past generations.⁵ The miner of the past was a man at

¹ HStAD NW41, 761, Senft, Report on the conference of training directors at the DKV Haus Essen, 15.1.1953.

² Ibid.

³ Karl Bax, 'Die Nachwuchssorgen des Steinkohlenbergbaus. Gründe des Nachwuchsmangels und Versuche zu ihrer Behebung', *Glückauf*, 1949, 85, 27/28, pp.477-485, here p.78.

⁴ See also 'Zur Berufsethik des Bergmanns', *Arbeitsblatt für die britische Zone*, 1947, 1, pp.170-172, here p.171.

⁵ *Der Förderturm*, June 1948, pp.1-2.

peace with the world, secure in his social position, loyal, respectful and dependable.

In one form or other, this image continually resurfaced in discussions and policies about rebuilding the workforce. At times the employers seem to have operated with the idea that this 'true miner' was really there already, if one only looked hard enough.¹ More widespread was the feeling that a number of forces had contrived to weaken the miners' pride and spirit and that the mines' task now was to rekindle that spirit. The apprentices were seen as the new elite that could achieve this. A perceptive correspondent from the *Neue Zeitung* noted in 1951 that both union and employers were trying to create out of the young miners members of:²

eines Bergmannstandes mit ausgeprägtem Standesbewußtsein, wobei für viele die fast legendäre Gestalt des alten Bergmanns auftaucht, für den die Arbeit im Pütt nicht bloßes Mittel zum Geldverdienen war, sondern Glück und Abenteuer eines ständigen Ringens mit der Naturgewalt des Berges.

For many employers, the necessity of workforce rejuvenation was thus also a key opportunity: the chance to revive that lost mining tradition and allow the old miner to be born anew. Following years of diminished managerial authority, a massive influx of outsiders and high wastage, the old goal of creating a stable, disciplined and loyal workforce now seemed more attractive than ever.³

The state, the unions and the apprentices

It was, in the last analysis, the employers who had set in motion the drive to turn the miners into a qualified profession, but the state too played a key role in encouraging and expanding the apprentice programme after the war.

¹ 'Zur Berufsethik des Bergmanns', p.171.

² 'Der "Lager Mensch" - Symptom einer Entwicklung', *Neue Zeitung* , 7.8.1951.

³ 'Das Nachwuchsproblem im Bergbau', p.331.

Initially, not all employers stood unqualifiedly behind the notion of the apprenticeship and, particularly at the level of colliery managers, there was considerable scepticism about the value of formal training.¹ In any case, no great initiatives of any sort could be expected from colliery officials in the pre-1948 period. Confronted with Military Government policies they did not like, many managers adopted a rather passive and resigned attitude and devoted their energies mainly to fending off the efforts of the NGCC.²

In this situation, various state bureaucracies did a lot to revive the apprentice strategy. The Mining Inspectorate was one of its most enthusiastic proponents, partly for reasons of safety but also because of a strong commitment to improving the miner's status.³ The labour administration too and, in particular, the Außenstelle Bergbau played an active role in creating a more positive attitude towards apprentice recruitment and the construction of apprentice hostels.⁴ The Abb's Dr. Herwegen was a passionate advocate of the *Berglehre*. His circulars, written in a unique style of what one can only call 'Bergarbeitervermittlerdichtung', were full of poetic and romantic statements calling on the mines to build more hostels for apprentices or improve the ones they had already, and urging the labour exchanges' careers advisors to take mining seriously, recognise its advantages and send the mines top quality youngsters.⁵

¹ See Herwegen's comments in OBADA I6301/969/47, ABB, Circular to colliery managements and labour exchanges, 17.3.1947.

² Ibid; Breder, *Geschichten vor Ort*, chapter 'Neubergleute'.

³ Eg. see OBADA I6303/273/48, OBAD to AA Gelsenkirchen, 31.1.1948.

⁴ OBADA I6300/1289/45, Memo signed by Oberbergrat Hentrich, 19.11.1945; OBADA I6303/568/47, ABB to OBAD, 25.2.1947.; HStAD NW73, 458, Arbeitsminister NRW, Hauptabt. LAA, Memo, 8.2.1949.

⁵ OBADA I6301/969/47, ABB, Circular to colliery managements and labour exchanges, 17.3.1947; I6301/927/46, LAA Westfalen-Lippe, Circular, signed Dr. Herwegen, 25.4.1946; I6301/628/47, ABB, Circular, 22.2.1947.

The eagerness of these administrations was a reminder that both Mines' Inspectorate and Labour Administration had been involved from the 1920's in the formulation and development of the apprenticeship strategy. Another, more general reason for state involvement was that, in Germany as a whole, the 1930's had seen the state involved in a general strategy of 'deproletarianisation through qualification'. The hope was that, by obtaining a skill, workers would also gain a stake in society and a sense of social position and social worth. This broad integrative strategy was much in evidence in the post-war era. Both state and church believed that by fostering the 'Berufsethos', they could remove the workers' 'Berufsminderwertigkeitsgefühl' and a potential source of radicalism.¹ Thus the state was more than willing to support the goal of using mining apprenticeships to create, as Herwegen put it, 'einen qualitativen Bergmannsstand'.²

A further, related motive for state involvement derived from the moral and political imperative of integrating the refugees. Providing good training opportunities was seen as vital if young refugees and other uprooted or dispossessed groups were to be integrated into post-war society.³ In 1948-9 it was already clear to the mines that the Federal Refugee Administration might provide considerable subsidies if it could be proven that the mines were offering refugees a sound training and a good educational environment.⁴ Well before the currency reform, there was a recognition in Ruhr circles that state and industry's interests might run in parallel here.⁵ In 1949, the DKBL produced an

¹ HStAD NW41, 761, Heinrich Werth to Weber, 21.6.1951, Annex.

² OBADA I6303/568/47, ABB to OBAD, 25.2.1947.

³ See the article 'Objektive und subjektive Berufsnot der Jugend', *Informations-Rundbrief zur sozialen Lage der Jugend*, 1952, 4, 4, p.1ff. (in HStAD NW45, 210): 'Maßnahmen zur Behebung der Not der berufslosen und heimatlosen Jugend in NRW'. op.cit.; NW41, 769, Report on an interministerial meeting at the BWIM, 6.6.1950.

⁴ HStAD NW41, 769, Report on an interministerial meeting at the BWIM, 6.6.1950.

⁵ See OBADA I6301/969/47, ABB, Circular to colliery managements and labour exchanges, 17.3.1947.

impressive public relations booklet, entitled 'Die Berglehrlingsheime des Steinkohlenbergbaus der Nordzone...im Dienste der Bekämpfung von Berufsnot und Arbeitslosigkeit unter den Jugendlichen',¹ the primary aim of which was to elicit state funding for hostel construction. Subsequently revised and reprinted many times,² the booklet drew attention to the economic, social and pedagogical virtues of mining apprenticeships and the comparatively good opportunities for youngsters from poor families to rise up within the industry.³ It was these arguments that persuaded the German refugee administration to give support.

The union too gave its unqualified support to the attempt to turn mining into a skilled profession and to increasing apprentice recruitment.⁴ One reason for this was that adult new labour was seen as hard to organise, partly because of the high wastage rate and partly because of a lack of understanding for the union movement.⁵ The IGB's reports in 1948 and 1949 contain continual references to problems with adult trainees.⁶ In addition the union was one of the strongest advocates of increasing mining's status and encouraging the public to see mining as a skilled profession.⁷ According to IGB representatives, as OBAD minutes record, 'Der bergmännische Berufsstolz verlange es, die öffentliche Meinung dahingehend zu beeinflussen, daß nicht jeder ohne weiteres Hauer werden könne'.⁸

¹ OBADA 16301/2448/49, DKBL (ed.), *Die Berglehrlingsheime des Steinkohlenbergbaus der Nordzone... im Dienste der Bekämpfung von Berufsnot und Arbeitslosigkeit unter den Jugendlichen*, Hamborn 29.10.1949.

² See OBADA I8006/36/53, Revised version of the above, [1953].

³ Ibid.

⁴ See, for instance, Johann Platte, 'Die Nachwuchsfrage im Kohlenbergbau.', *Arbeitsblatt für die britische Zone*, 1948, 2, 11, pp.399-400.

⁵ Eberhard Kadow, 'Jugendwohnheime und Jugendheimleiter', *Bergbau und Wirtschaft*, 1952, 5, 4, pp.88-90.

⁶ DGBA File 'IGBergbau. Monatsberichte der IGBergbau 1949', Monthly reports for April, May and June 1949, esp. reports from Bochum District.

⁷ Platte, 'Die Nachwuchsfrage', p.400.

⁸ OBADA 118.10/4/56, Memo concerning a meeting to discuss the draft directive on miners' training of 2.8.1956, 2.11.1956.

The pace of apprentice recruitment

Even before 1948, a considerable number of apprentices had been recruited (see table 12). The NGCC itself was persuaded of the apprentice's virtues, being well aware of the mines' general need for rejuvenation and accepting, at least in part, the employers' arguments about the importance of status.¹ However, since the NGCC's main efforts had to lie in finding adult recruits who could make an immediate contribution to increasing coal production, juvenile recruitment remained but a small fraction of overall intake.

After 1948, expansion of juvenile recruitment was initially retarded by the lack of finance for apprentice hostels and by the small number of school-leavers in 1948-9. Nevertheless, the growing amount of energy and resources committed to the task soon began to pay dividends. In 1949 an experiment was undertaken with the Gruppe Dortmund of the GBAG, whereby the group and the ABB selected a target area, Lübeck in Schleswig-Holstein, and developed an intensive advertising campaign involving local schools, careers advisors and parents.² In 1950, the experiment was widened and a number of collieries were assigned 'Patenbezirke', or foster-areas, in which they were the only mine recruiting youngsters.³ Good relations with local schools and careers advisors were assiduously cultivated and the collieries encouraged frequent trips to the mines for officials from the Patenbezirke. 'Die eingeladenen Pädagogen werden während dieses Besuches erstklassig bewirtet, haben keinerlei Unkosten und brauchen sich nur dadurch zu revanchieren, daß sie möglichst viele Jungen überreden, in den Bergbau zu gehen', as Manfred Daberkow wryly observed in

¹ See OBADA I6301/1339/45, Präsident of LAA Westfalen-Lippe to AA, 28.10.1945. On status see PRO FO942, 509, NGCC, 'Steinkohle production in the British occupied Zone of Germany. Review of production', May 1946.

² 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau...', p.63ff.

³ *Ibid.*

1955.¹ This combination of intensive recruitment campaigns and propitious labour market conditions secured the mines a stream of apprentices which continued to grow after adult recruitment ran into difficulties.

In the early 1950's, the employers seemed well on the way to removing the mines' negative reputation. As well as mobilising reserves of young labour from far flung regions, the mines appeared to have changed attitudes within the Ruhr too. In Dortmund in 1952, more boys put down mining as their first choice than any other trade.² In Rheinhausen in 1951, 20 percent of male school leavers went to the mines and the proportion was even higher in the following year.³ An impressive community study carried out by the SoFoSt argued that general perceptions of the miner in the town were improving.⁴ Local girls, it was argued, no longer had any negative feelings about marrying a miner.

Table 12: juvenile intake 1946-58⁵

<u>Year</u>	<u>overall</u>	<u>from outside mining area</u>
1.7.46-30.6.47	11,740	2,130
1.7.47-30.6.48	10,911	1,725
1.7.48-30.6.49	5,207	1,328
1.7.49-30.6.50	11,832	2,539
1.7.50-30.12.50	2,933	829
1951	14,467	3,933
1952	16,462	5,210
1953	17,430	6,176
1954	19,021	6,281
1955*	11,849	4,745
1956*	8,912	3,728
1957*	6,984	2,982

* = apprentices only

¹ Daberkow, 'Die Seßhaftmachung...', p.63.

² IGBE Presse-Archiv, Vol. 'Arbeitskräfte für den Bergbau. Neubergleute. Bis 1952', Untitled excerpt from *Westdeutsches Tageblatt*, Dortmund, 7.10.1952.

³ 'Bergbau zieht auch Bergmannssöhne wieder an', WAZ, Moers edition, 25.10.1952.

⁴ Croon and Utermann, *Zeche und Gemeinde*, p.109ff.

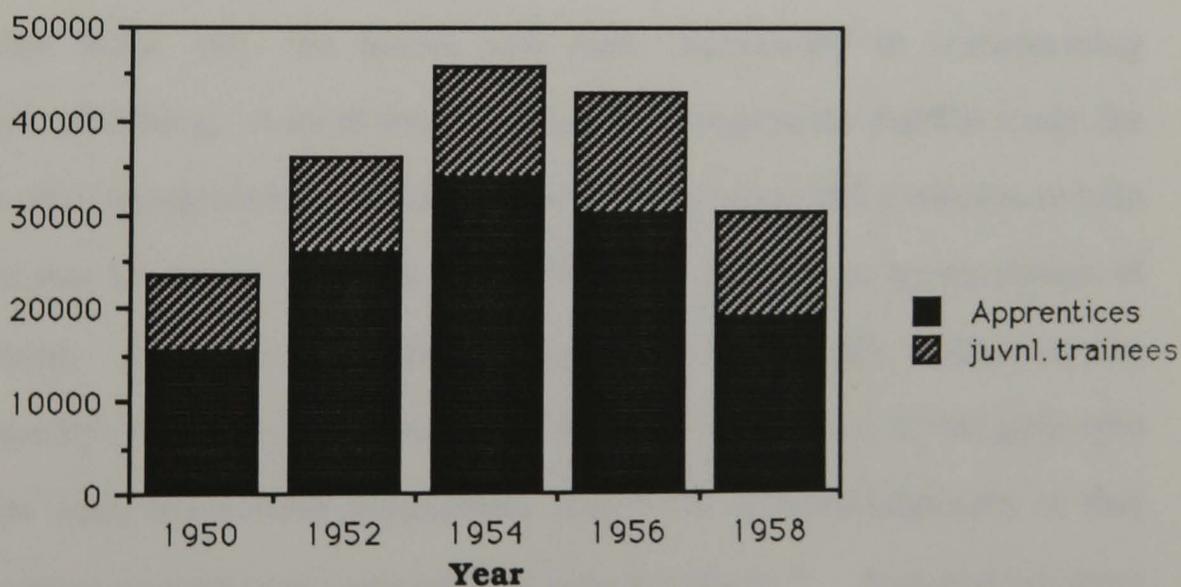
⁵ Juvenile trainees and mining apprentices taken on by hard coal mines in NRW. Source: for 1946-1949, OBADA I6301/2448/49, DKBL to OBAD, 5.11.1949, annex: table, 'Einstellungen von Jugendlichen im Ruhrbergbau. For 1949-1957 OBADA I6303, vols. 1 and 2, ABB Monthly reports on juvenile hirings; I8006, vol 2 & I8007, ABB Annual reports.

The supply dries up

Yet, in reality, the mines' achievements fell far short of expectations. The employers had calculated that around 12,000 apprentices a year would be needed, making an overall apprentice population of about 35-40,000.¹ For a brief period, this figure was actually obtained (see figure 5), but by the mid-1950's the apprentice population was already on the wane.

Part of the explanation was that school rolls were falling. In the school year 1953-1954, 485,070 boys left school, whereas in the period 1957-58 there were only 360,244 male school-leavers, a drop of 25 percent.² Yet over the same period, the number of mining apprentices hired fell by almost 60 percent, indicating that there were other problems too. It was evident that the growth of other opportunities on the labour market was drawing potential recruits away from the mines.

Fig 5: Young workers in the Ruhr mines³



¹ 'Das Nachwuchsproblem im Bergbau', p.331; BAK B102, 33189, BWiM, Internal memo from Imhäuser to Classen, 30.5.1951.

² Ibid.

³ Source: UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht für die Jahre 1958 bis 1960*, p.89 facing.

The collieries had never really succeeded in establishing mining as a desirable profession, despite appearances. The mines' ability to draw young labour, considerable though it was, was based on the temporary exigencies of the post-war period. This applied particularly to the substantial recruitment from outside the Ruhr. Between 60 and 70 percent of hostel occupants were refugees, suggesting acute material pressures were the main reason for sending youngsters to the mines.¹ Few established citizens of West Germany were willing to send their sons to mining even if for a well paid apprenticeship that offered good accommodation. It was clear from the start that once the expellees were more settled and more prosperous the same would apply to them. An even more revealing aspect of the apprentices' social background was that almost one third of hostel occupants had lost at least one parent, in most cases the father.² This was proof that the mines were benefiting from the acute but temporary financial difficulties in which a significant proportion of the population found itself after the war.

Within the Ruhr, too, the mines had never succeeded in transforming perceptions of mining. A lot of the references to change in the SoFoSt study, for instance, were exaggerated. The Dortmund team felt they had a mission to help the miner lose his proletarian status and this influenced their interpretation of the material. Through an interview with one of the study's originators the present author was able to ascertain, for example, that many of the girls who had made such comforting statements about the miner's eligibility in fact proved to have no miners in their circle of acquaintances.³ And another piece of evidence that never made its way into the study: one of the field workers lived

¹ 'Maßnahmen zur Behebung der Not der berufslosen und heimatlosen Jugend in NRW', op.cit.; Daberkow, 'Die Seßhaftmachung', p.50ff; 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.109.

² Ibid.

³ Information in an interview with Professor Helmut Croon, 9.4.1984.

with a local craftsman's family and though there were plenty of conversations about family, friends and the changing nature of the town, it was never mentioned that a sister of the family was living in the 'Kolonie', the miners' estate. The fieldworker discovered her existence only by accident.¹

In his writings about the Ruhr in the 1950's and 1960's, the former miner Hans Dieter Baroth conveys clearly the feeling in the Ruhr that to leave mining was a major status jump. The following extract from the semi-autobiographical collection 'Streuselkuchen in Ickern' comes from an account of the Woetke's, a mining family who, with the earnings of father and older brothers to carry them through, have managed to get the youngest boy a place as a craftsman's apprentice. The passage concerns the attitude of the other brothers towards the family's only craftsman:²

Sie akzeptierten seine besondere Stellung. Es wurde auch nie in seinem Beisein oder während seiner Abwesenheit, wie bei anderen, darüber diskutiert, und sie trumpten auch nicht auf, er bekomme später in seinem Beruf keine Deputatkohle und müsse sich deshalb im Winter teure Kohlen kaufen, er bekomme keine Werkswohnung wie die anderen, so daß er sich eine viele teure privat mieten müsse und weniger auf der Hand habe als die, die zur Zeche gingen. Seine Arbeitszeit sei auch nicht so geregelt, denn mehr als acht Stunden müsse er doch oft machen. Er komme auch nicht, wie die anderen Männer aus der Herbertstraße, schon gewaschen und umgezogen nach Hause, er komme noch im blauen Arbeitsanzug und ungewaschen und müsse sich erst in der angebauten Waschküche saubern.

Es wurde überhaupt nicht darüber gesprochen, daß Hans Woetke morgens zwei Stunden später als die anderen aus dem Haus ging, dann aber in seinem Arbeitsanzug, daß er auch erheblich später zurückkam, während die Brüder schon am frühen Nachmittag nach der schweren Arbeit unter Tage am Mittagstisch saßen, daß er eigentlich an den Wochentagen tagsüber überhaupt keine warme Mahlzeit einnahm, denn nach dem Frühstück zu Hause nahm er sich ein paar Butterbrote in Zeitungspapier gewickelt mit, wenn er am späten Nachmittag zurückkam, setzte ihm seine Mutter eine große Tasse mit Kaffee auf den Tisch, dazu Brot, Margarine und Marmelade, gelegentlich auch Wurst oder Schinken, denn das Mittagessen wollte sie nicht so lange warm halten.

All these disadvantages were as nothing to the single vital achievement of having made it out of the pits.

¹ Ibid.

² Hans Dieter Baroth, *Streuselkuchen in Ickern*, Cologne 1980, p.188.

The status campaign

During the war, the employers had already recognised that transforming public perceptions of mining would be a difficult task. To complement the impact of the apprenticeships themselves, the employers had proposed a massive public relations campaign to be carried out in the post-war period.¹ Soon after 1945, this idea was revived. Hanns W. Brose submitted a number of proposals along the lines of the Wirtschaftsgruppe's plan.² Karl Bax, another member of the war-time public relations team, produced a major article in the industry's prestigious periodical, 'Glückauf', arguing that only propaganda and public relations could change perceptions inside and outside mining so as to create the right kind of workforce.³ The labour administration too, endorsed vigorous public relations work. 'Aufklärung, Aufklärung überall' was Dr. Herwegen's recipe.⁴

Bax, Herwegen and others portrayed the contemporary aversion to mine-work as something irrational, or at least something divorced from the reality of mining life. If only the true facts about mining were known, or if only miners themselves would not always concentrate on the negative aspects of their occupation, mining would once again enjoy popularity.⁵ There was clearly a strong measure of double-speak or self-deception to this, perhaps even a resigned view that the realities of mining could not be changed, only its image. But as the Baroth piece above shows in all clarity, there was also a real truth, namely,

¹ See chapter 1, p.40; Zimmermann, 'Ausbruchshoffnungen', p.114; Brose, *Eine Gemeinschaftswerbung*, passim.

² DGBA File 'Industrieverband Bergbau 1946-1948. Tätigkeitsbericht', Memo, 'Werbung für den Bergbau', 6.5.1947; Hanns W. Brose, *Die Nachwuchsnöte im deutschen Bergbau*, Frankfurt 1945; Brose, *Eine Gemeinschaftswerbung*.

³ Karl Bax, 'Die Nachwuchssorgen des Steinkohlenbergbaus als Aufgabe der Aufklärung und Werbung', *Glückauf*, 1949, 85, pp.513-520.

⁴ OBADA 16301/927/46, LAA, Circular, ref 6301/6410, 25.4.1946.

⁵ See also Karl Bax, 'Die Nachwuchssorgen des Steinkohlenbergbaus. Gründe des Nachwuchsmangels und Versuche zu ihrer Behebung', *Glückauf*, 1949, 85, pp.477-485.

that the hostility to taking up mining as a profession was greater than the sum of mining's disadvantages - real and considerable though the negative aspects of mining were. The positive side of this for the mines was that there was a chance to improve their labour position without putting more money on the table. If the 'irrational' element in the way in which mining was generally perceived could be removed or made more positive, then the existing wage and social conditions could be expected to exert a stronger pull on the labour market.

The main problem about the sort of campaign envisaged by Brose was its cost, estimated by Brose himself before the currency reform to be around 14 Million RM.¹ This was the main stumbling block for the employers. In 1947, Heinrich Kost had suggested that a special committee be created to look into advertising and publicity and the result was the Ausschuß für bergbauliche Nachwuchswerbung, a body containing representatives from mines, the IVB, the ZfA and the ABB. The idea was to develop some sort of central recruitment strategy, but when Brose raised the idea of carrying out the wartime project, the mining experts rejected the idea as being too expensive.² Aside from the costs, the employers never liked entrusting any project to an outside company. In 1950, Brose tried again and was again rejected. The DKBL informed the collieries that it had not yet developed a central advertising strategy.³

It is impossible to establish from the records available what the industry's advertising budget was, let alone to ascertain the proportion of that budget devoted to enhancing mining's image. There is no doubt that a considerable amount was done - special articles and features in magazines for young people, a short film ('Mein Freund wird Bergmann') for schools use, as well as a series of

¹ DGBA File 'IVBergbau 1946-1948', Memo, 'Werbung für den Bergbau', 6.5.1947.

² Ibid.

³ Ges Verb. File 'Rundschreiben Ausbildung 1946-1950'. DKBL, Circular No. 1 60, 26.9.1950.

slides for illustrated lectures. There was even a card game, 'Bergbau-Quartett' which offered information about mining.¹ Yet, it seems fairly clear that no attempt was made to mount a large, central campaign to transform mining's image. Even for the 80,000DM necessary to design the originals for a major new poster campaign the mines tried to get outside funding (from the ECA) and, when it was not forthcoming, dropped the project.²

This was probably in part simple conservatism. Some of the collieries' own attempts at public relations remained distinctly amateurish,³ suggesting that at least at some levels in the industry, public relations was not yet taken all that seriously. The UVR's manpower experts believed that the British National Coal Board had developed a much more active campaigning strategy than the German mines.⁴

Probably more decisive than conservatism per se was that the employers *themselves* did not quite believe they could reverse the general trend towards less physical, more technical occupations. They would have a go if the money came from another source, but they were not prepared to risk millions of marks on a public relations campaign. It is noteworthy that their recruitment propaganda, insofar as it concentrated on the physical conditions at all, always tried to show the latest technology and was, in a way, selling something that did not yet exist.⁵ The coal plough was already in the illustrated brochures at a time when over 90 percent of coal was still mined with the pneumatic pick.⁶

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B119, 1519, BAM IIa1 Unterausschuß I, Memo, 'Vorschlag für die Ausgestaltung der Werbemittel...', 28.3.1952; OBADA I8006/1192/53, DKBL, Circular No. V 5, 1953.

² 'Vorschlag für die Ausgestaltung der Werbemittel...'; BAK-ZwSt.H B119, 1519, BAVAV, Memo, 6.3.1954.

³ OBADA I8006/3290/55, ABB to OBAD, 6.12.1955, annex Director of AA Neu Ulm to President of South Bavarian Labour administration, 11.10.1955.

⁴ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 30091, BWIM, Memo, 25.4.1955.

⁵ See discussions in BAK-ZwSt.H B119, 1519, President of NRW LAA to President BAVAV, 2.4.1954.

⁶ See, for instance, the advertising brochure *Zeche Hannover and Hannibal* (ed.), *Bergbau und Jugend*, Bochum 1950.

This was an understandable technique but too much of the reality of mining life stood in conflict with it and it was probably in awareness of this that the employers did not embark on anything bigger. It was only much later, in the 1960's and 1970's, when mining did become largely mechanised and an increasing proportion of the workforce consisted of skilled mechanics and electricians, that the strategy could really work. In the meantime, the employers shrank back from selling mining work's real qualities. They were nervous of stressing the fact that because mechanisation was underdeveloped, the miner had a far more varied and far more independent job than many other trades and instead chose to emphasise the way in which mining was similar to other professions, namely, through advancing mechanisation.¹ Were the employers too timid in their attitude to the real world of mining? This is impossible to say, but their reticence was certainly understandable.

Training and status

The failure to persuade the broad public of the miner's status derived also from inherent features of the training scheme itself.

In the first place, a lot of the training period was training in name only. Most boys started at 14 and, for health and safety reasons, the state allowed them underground only at age 16. Thus two years of their apprenticeship were generally spent above ground. The mines created special training faces on the surface ('Lehrstollen'), but, even so, were hard put to it to occupy the youngsters for the full period. There were simply not enough formal skills to fill up the two years.² Of course, the mines could have taught more advanced work in the

¹ Vorschlag für die Ausgestaltung der Werbemittel...; Another aspect of the same dilemma was that a test with a placard showing young miners standing near some advanced machinery resulted in almost 80% of those looking at it not realising it was just about the mines. BAK-ZwSt.H B119, 1036, AA Münster, Memo, 3.7.1955.

² OBADA 16303/1004/46, Essener Steinkohlenbergwerke to BA Werden, 18.6.1946, cited in BA Werden to OBAD, 10.7.1946.

mechanical workshop or in electricians and so on, but they were understandably hesitant to impart skills that would not then be used in occupational life.¹ It was bound to lead to dissatisfaction if skills were taught that were not then used.² On the other hand, shortening the apprenticeship would downgrade mining and undermine the attempt to improve its status.

Thus the mines had to think how usefully to employ the apprentices. The answer, invariably, was to put them at the picking belt, sorting coal. Here was an unpleasant job that needed to be done and one not easily mechanised. As a comparatively low-paid group, the apprentices were a cheap source of labour. Of all the complaints raised about the apprenticeship, the one about lengthy stints at the picking belt was the most common.³ For years, the labour directors tried to reduce the time spent by apprentices there and with time they seem to have had success. But as late as the mid-1950's it was still a frequent topic of complaint and discussion among the labour directors.⁴

The cost of this type of work was not that apprentices left in droves during their training. On the contrary, wastage during the apprenticeship was low.⁵ But it was detrimental to the general goal of enhancing the industry's status. It was widely recognised both inside and outside the industry, that the training offered by mining fell short of that offered by other trade apprenticeships. A confidential paper on training in the mines produced by one of the industry's leading experts concluded, 'daß die Knappenprüfungen den handwerklichen Gesellenprüfungen, Industriefacharbeiterprüfungen und kaufmännischen

¹ OBADA I6303/1004/46, BA Werden to OBAD, 10.7.1946.

² OBADA I6303/1004/46, Rheinische Stahlwerke, Essen to BA Bottrop, 4.7.1946.

³ See, for instance, BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, annex to minutes of AAA meeting on 10.4.1956: Paper, 'Jugendarbeitsschutzaktion der IGB', October 1955.

⁴ IGBEA, Handakten Rudi Quast, File 'Arbeitskreis-Arbeitsdirektoren 1952 - 1956', Minutes of meeting of Essen/Gelsenkirchen district, 13.5.1954; Minutes of meeting of Recklinghausen district, 1.12.1954.

⁵ Ges.Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß 1948-1958', Minutes of Arbeitsausschuß für Ausbildungsfragen (Arb.aus.f.A) meeting, 17.3.1955.

Gehilfenprüfungen in ihren Anforderungen im allgemeinen nicht voll entsprechen'.¹ That was one reason why the apprenticeship strategy could only be partially effective in enhancing mining's status. In addition, few youngsters developed any great respect for their occupation and a great many left soon after completing their apprenticeship.

An even more serious challenge to the status of the mining apprentices was the fact that, once qualified, they did the same work and were paid little more than the unskilled adult trainees who had received only a few months training. It proved impossible to introduce anything more than a symbolic differential between the remuneration of adult trainee and skilled Knappe.

This became apparent in the negotiations over the trainees' wages at the beginning of 1949. The employers entered the negotiations keen to reduce the more costly privileges offered the trainees and to strengthen the differential between skilled and unskilled miners.² Hitherto, the trainees were guaranteed employment in contract wage work, rather than on the less remunerative time rate jobs away from the face.³ Secondly, they received special training supplements during their first months in contract wage. The mines objected to these provisions on cost grounds, but also because they seemed to favour adult new miners in relation to apprentices and juvenile trainees.⁴ After all, former apprentices or juvenile trainees did not receive a supplement when they graduated to contract wage work. In addition, the fact that adult trainees had a

¹ Ges.Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß 1948 - 1958', Annex to minutes of meeting on 21.3.1957: Steffen, 'Grundsatzfragen der bergmännischen Berufsausbildung', Hamborn, no date.

² AZG File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung....', Memo concerning meeting of the NRW mines Tarifausschuß, 28.1.1949- comments of Mittelviehhaus, Janus, Rauhut and others.

³ AZG File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung...', GMSO, Circular Nr.41, 4.2.1947, annex 'Merkblatt für die Anwerbung von Arbeitskräften für den rheinisch-westfälischen Steinkohlenbergbau', 10.1.1947.

⁴ I.e recruits taken on as boys but without an apprenticeship. Despite the introduction of the apprenticeship, many youngsters continued to enter the industry on this basis, often because they lacked the educational qualifications for an apprenticeship. Virtually all juvenile trainees at this time came from the locality.

right to be employed in contract wage work meant that the mines had to find another source of labour for the lower paid fixed-wage jobs away from the face. In to this breach stepped the juvenile trainees and Knappen, some of whom found themselves stuck for lengthy periods in low paid jobs because the collieries had too few replacements to allow them to move into contract wage.¹ The unions particularly objected to this because nearly all of the youngsters at that stage were local boys. It seemed as if local lads were being disadvantaged so that 'outsiders' could earn a good wage.²

The regulations which emerged from the 1949 negotiations did remove the training supplement and the right to the contract wage.³ Yet they were noteworthy for the very limited way in which they favoured apprentices and Knappen at the cost of adult trainees. During their first year in contract wage, adult trainees received 90 percent of the full wage, 92.5 percent in the second year and 95 percent until they became *Hauer*. Previously the Knappen had been on this scale too, but now they were made 2.5 percent better off, beginning with a 7.5 percent deduction and attaining the minimum 5 percent deduction already in their second year. This small advantage was a sign that in practice the two groups did the same work but even more of the industry's awareness that it was going to need adult trainees for a while yet. Even in the present favourable labour supply conditions, a decent incentive had to be offered.⁴

In practice, there was often no difference at all between the two groups' earnings because the mines frequently did not make these deductions.⁵ The reason was

¹ AZG File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung....', Memo concerning meeting of the NRW mines Tarifausschuß, 28.1.1949.

² Hence Gutermuth's stress at a March meeting of the wages commission that henceforth local new miners must be at least as well paid as outsiders. See AZG File "61" [=I 1 61] *Bezahlung der Neubergleute bzw Umschüler*, Minutes of meeting of Tarifausschuß on 11.3.1949.

³ Minutes of meeting of Tarifausschuß on 11.3.1949.

⁴ IGB (ed.) *Jahrbuch 1947*, p.99; *Jahrbuch 1950/1*, p.238.

⁵ See Köker's complaint in BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, Minutes of AAA meeting, 14.12.1953; also BBA 32, 741, Minutes of Hibernia directors' meeting, 4.6.1948.

the increasing number of men employed under the one-man contract wage system.¹ Under the older collective contract, the wage contract was worked out for the group on the basis of the full Hauer rate (Hauerdurchschnittslohn). The wage earned was divided up between the men, the Hauer receiving a full share each, and the less experienced men receiving their share minus the appropriate percentage. A new trainee would thus receive a full share minus 10 percent. In other words, the smaller wages for the newcomers had never benefited the employers and instead were designed to compensate the experienced men for the lower output of newer colleagues.

In faces where the one-man contract wage was introduced and wages were paid individually, rather than to the group, the situation was quite different. Here the newcomer was entirely dependent on his own work rather than receiving his share of a wage achieved by group output. He enjoyed no benefit from the higher output of experienced colleagues and, equally, did not depress their wages either. There was thus no justification for taking a percentage off his wage - his lower output and thus lower earnings penalised him for his inexperience enough already.² Though some employers still made the deductions, many did not and it became increasingly general practice to pay all men in one-man contract wage the same. Consequently, even the small status difference laid down in the wage regulations disappeared. It was therefore difficult to take the apprenticeship all that seriously.

These questions of comparability would not have arisen in the same intensity, if, as the mines had intended, the apprentices had indeed become the main source of new labour for the pits. Yet wastage remained such that the pits were

¹ Ibid.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, BWIM, Memo concerning AAA meeting on 14.12.1953, 17.12.1953.

forced to hire 50,000 or more new adult recruits each year.¹ This dwarfed the apprentice intake and, given the fact that adult recruits and apprentices did the same work, made nonsense of the notion that mining was a skilled profession.

Apprentices and 'Stammesbildung'

Apart from leaving public perceptions largely unchanged, the other major disappointment to the employers was that they failed to create out of the apprentices a new type of miner with greater stability, or loyalty than their established or adult compatriots. The Knappen (miners who had completed their training but had not yet had the further working experience necessary to take the Hauer exam),² were not much more likely to stay in the mines than other young adults.³

The full dimensions and causes of this failure will emerge only later in this study, after other chapters have examined the employers' attempts to shape the apprentices' living environment, leisure activity and thinking. Nevertheless, the analysis of apprentices' induction has already offered a number of reasons why the Knappe's own working experience did not persuade him of his special status. Even more significant, however was the experience of working in the adult faces after qualifying. A great many Knappen left soon after passing their exams.⁴ True, some had planned this in advance, the idea being to gain a qualification from an industry that paid what were for an apprentice extremely good wages and then to use this qualification to obtain a more agreeable job elsewhere. But for many others, it was the shock of transition from the

¹ Ges.Verb., StdKw., Table: 'Belegschaftswechsel - Arbeiter untertage. Ruhr'.

² Strictly speaking, they were 'Knappen' only for the first year of employment after training and then became 'Lehrhauer'. However the term is used here as a useful way of distinguishing between former apprentices and former adult trainees.

³ See Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1957*, p.24; Ges.Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß 1948-1958', Minutes of Arb.aus.f.A. meeting, 17.3.1955 and 5.4.1955.

⁴ OBADA I6301/774/50, OBAD to VW[sic!], 13.3.1950

relatively protected world of the apprentice to the harsher environment outside that stimulated their departure. Even after employers made greater efforts at easing the transition, for instance by creating special faces where output norms were set below those of the adult faces, it proved very difficult to square the two worlds of apprentice and adult miner.¹

All the problems associated with creating a young mining elite derived from one fact: the apprenticeships had been grafted on to the industry not because the production process required them but because of wider social goals. The work process itself undermined attempts to create a special class. In addition, the managerial style prevalent in mining made the transition from apprentice to miner a hard one. These conditions limited what the apprenticeship strategy could achieve both in terms of the number of recruits and the willingness of qualified youngsters to stay.

Ultimately the point was that the apprentice strategy could not be expected to achieve workforce stability on its own. It could succeed only if the mines managed, at least partially, to create a hospitable environment for their *adult* labour. The high levels of wastage among both adult trainees and qualified former apprentices suggests that the industry failed to do this. And the longer the collieries were forced by wastage to maintain high levels of unskilled adult recruitment, the more suspect appeared their claim that mining had become a skilled profession. In many respects, therefore, the mines' response to *adult* new labour held the key to the success of the apprenticeships - much as the industry had hoped that the relationship would be the other way round. It is therefore to the employers' management of adult labour and the way in which

¹ Ges. Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß 1948-1958', Minutes of Arb.aus.f.A meeting, 5.4.1955.

the adult trainees were inducted and integrated into the mines that we must now turn.

Chapter 7: 'Pit militarism' and insubordinate recruits.

Adult new labour in the mines, 1948-58

1: New labour and the pursuit of efficiency 1948-50

Strategies of integration

Agreed though they were on the superior virtues of the apprentice, the employers were in no doubt that for some time to come adult labour would remain essential, both to expand and rejuvenate the workforce and to replace wastage.¹ The priority was thus not to eliminate adult intake but to make it more cost effective and productive.

What were the best ways to achieve this? Some steps were so obvious and uncontroversial that they would have figured in any strategy. The mines began, for example, to demand a higher standard of fitness from would-be recruits. During 1948, the ABB and the DKBL agreed on new medical requirements, which in 1950 were made even stricter at the behest of the OBAD.² The new standards were rigorously enforced³ and their success was clearly manifest in the declining numbers leaving the mines due to unfitness for mining work (see table 13).

Another obvious step was to concentrate on younger labour in order to accelerate rejuvenation. In 1948, the upper age limit for recruits was brought down from 40 to 25.⁴ A small number of older men continued to be taken on but the under 25's made up 86 percent of the recruits entering the Ruhr mines via the Hiltrop

¹ OBADA I6301/774/50, OBAD to VFW[sic!], 13.3.1950; Ullrich's comments in BBA 32, 741, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, 30.1.1948.

² 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.75; OBADA I3873/809/51, OBAD, Vorläufige Richtlinien für die ärztlichen Anlegeuntersuchungen..., 1.3.1951.

³ 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.75, op.cit.

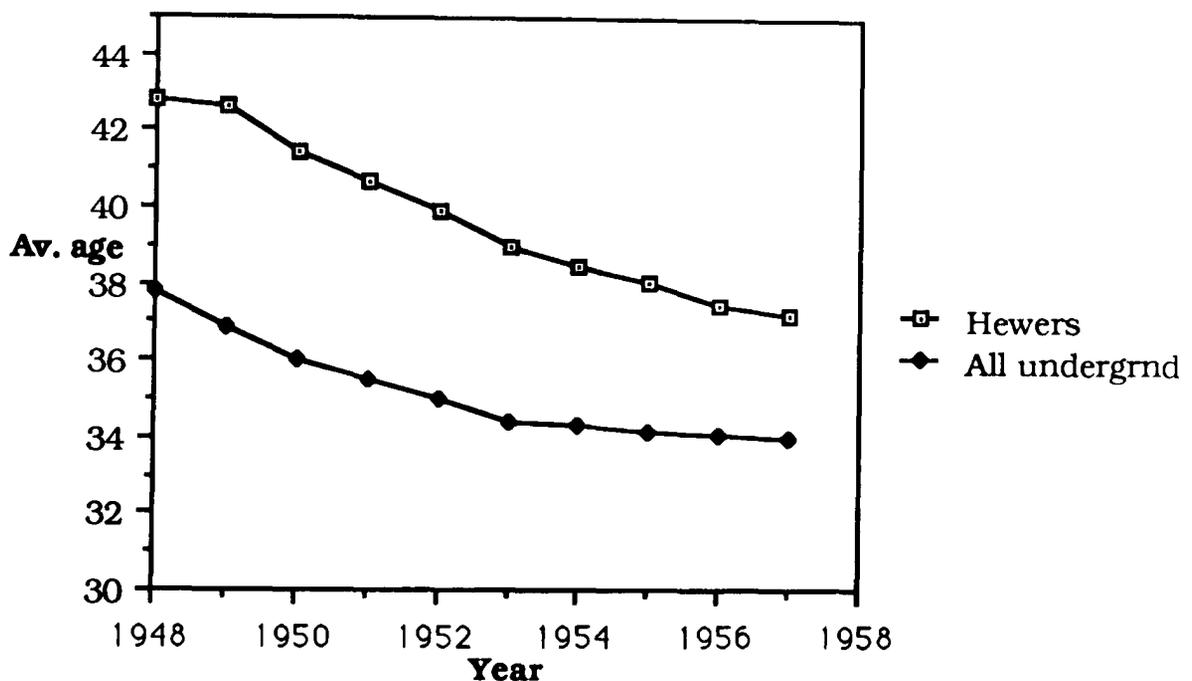
⁴ *Ibid.*, p.74.

(later Essen-Heisingen) reception camp.¹ Over the following years, average workforce age dropped steadily as a result (see fig.6).

Table 13: Wastage underground due to unfitness for mining work (excluding old age)²

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wastage</u>	<u>As % of workforce</u> ³
1947	4141	2.1
1948	5420	2.3
1949	3148	1.2
1950	3468	1.2
1951	1938	0.7
1952	1726	0.6
1953	1458	0.5

Fig 6: Average age of male workers in Ruhr mining⁴



Beyond such obvious measures, there were two main questions that any new labour strategy had to answer. In the first place, there was the problem of how best to turn the newcomers into safe and productive workers and where the

¹ Ges.Verb., Heisingen papers. Log book of Heisingen camp.

² Source: Ges.Verb., StdKW, Table: 'Aufteilung des Abganges nach Gründen - Arbeiter untertage. Ruhr.', column 3, 'Berguntauglichkeit'.

³ Author's calculation.

⁴ OBAD annual report 1957.

trade-off between productivity and safety should be made. The difficulty, here, as ever, was that the productive jobs in mining required few formal skills yet involved a high degree of danger and often demanded a whole range of aptitudes and talents. The other issue, and one that in the long term was likely to be even more critical, was the problem that had emerged in the 1930's, namely how to retain new labour without offering wages that the industry could not afford.

The traditional approach to productive and social integration, employed in the great days of the Ruhr's expansion, has already emerged in chapter 1. At work the employers had relied on a rigid authoritarianism to lick the newcomers into shape. There was little or no emphasis on formal training, with established men expected to impart such skills as were required. To bind the men to the mine and to the locality, the collieries had developed a number of social policy initiatives, the most important of which was the provision of company housing.

This traditional package had not been substantially revised since the turn of the century. Between the beginning of the 1920's and the Second World War, there was, after all, no major influx of adult labour. True, thought was given in the 1930's to workforce regeneration, but the solutions found involved apprentices and did not bear on adult intake. Indeed, part of the apprenticeship's *raison d'être* was that it would allow the mines to do without adult labour altogether. During the war too, the traditional pattern of induction had been modified only to the extent that a limited amount of formal group training was offered to the conscripts. Otherwise it was business as usual, only more so, since the racially inferior foreigners could count on blows and kicks as part of the disciplinary procedure.

The vigorous endorsement of the apprenticeship strategy after 1945, however, suggested that the employers might be willing to try a new approach to the adults as well, once it became clear that they could not rely on juvenile labour alone.

In the first place, the continuous pronouncements that mining was skilled work seemed to indicate that employers would now insist on careful training for their new recruits and would see productivity as being more the product of qualified labour than of iron discipline. Secondly, the apprentices had been created in the belief that a careful introduction to mining work would lead to workforce stability. From here it was surely just a small step to acknowledging this link for adult new labour, making the working experience more integrative and not relying solely on external bonds and inducements, such as housing, to cement the newcomer to his profession. Thirdly, the apprentice strategy had arisen because of the recognition that the unfavourable labour market trend against mining necessitated a new approach to labour integration. Did not the same logic suggest the need for innovations in response to adult labour too?

Selecting for stability

One way of identifying the employers' priorities and, in particular, how seriously they were taking the problem of workforce stability, is to look at their selection criteria. What sort of men were they selecting and for what reasons?

In fact, the employers' room to impose a particular strategy on to adult recruitment was small. One of the problems facing the mines was that recruits likely to prove permanent additions to the mines were hard to identify. In spring 1948, for instance, the DKBL introduced a new procedure at the central reception camp in Bochum-Hiltrop, whereby applicants coming from outside the Ruhr were subjected to an impromptu interview.¹ Through a carefully designed and seemingly random series of questions about previous employment and future intentions, the employers tried to identify which recruits would prove

¹ See OBADA 18006/2386/48, Otto Brass, Report on the selection of 'charakterlich nicht geeigneter' new miners from May to July 1948, August 1948.

long-term additions to the workforce.¹ But it proved very difficult to make any very certain assessment and the experiment does not seem to have been continued. The mines generally restricted their selection to weeding out applicants who had a criminal record or had left previous employment in breach of contract.

Another factor impinging on the mines' ability to choose stable recruits was the housing shortage. Married men, especially men with young families, were potentially less likely to change jobs than unattached bachelors, as the mines were later able to confirm.² However, in the short term this was negated by the absence of suitable apartments. The collieries' experience was that under the existing conditions, married men, especially if they came from outside the Ruhr, were less likely to stay in the mines, because they could often not afford or stand living apart from their families. That was one reason why the employers tended to favour bachelors and or recruits from the locality.³

Though their room for manoeuvre was limited, there are slight indications that the employers were not thinking realistically about wastage. Even beyond the dictates of the housing shortage, the mines seem to have gone for young bachelors and particularly for local men, ignoring the large number of the dislocated and dispossessed in the provinces who were looking for a secure profession.⁴ There were moves afoot to close down the reception camp in Hiltrop (later Essen-Heisingen) altogether, indicating that employers expected soon to be able to do without outsiders and rely exclusively on local labour.⁵

¹ Ibid.

² 'Neue Heimat am Pütt', *Handesblatt*, Düsseldorf, 21.11.1952.

³ OBADA 18010/1238/49, OBAD Lagebericht for 1st Q. 1949, April 1949; 18010/1914/49, OBAD Lagebericht for 2nd Q. 1949, July 1949.

⁴ It is hard to prove this with certainty, but an indication is given by OBADA 18010/1238/49, OBAD Lagebericht for 1. Q. 1949.

⁵ See BBA 32, 741, Minutes of Hibernia directors' meeting, 30.1.1948.

Though the DKBL was able to prevent this, the labour administration continued to complain about the mines' unwillingness to take on outsiders.¹

At one level this was simply a narrow cost calculation. Local men were cheaper to hire; single men did not need housing; very young men would have a longer working life.² At a deeper level, these moves betrayed a hope of returning to 'normal' conditions, in which the special expedients of the post-war period could be done away with. Indeed, even senior DKBL spokesmen were to be found talking about a 'normalisation' of the labour market, and meaning the emergence of one more favourable to the mines before.³ One cannot avoid the impression that in their day-to-day labour policy, the mines were not thinking about their difficulties at the end of the 1930's and had a mental image of normality that had more to do with the labour surplus of earlier years.

Training and induction

The real test of the employers' policy, however, came when the newcomers arrived at the mines. Early in 1948, it became apparent that a new wind, or perhaps better, a new, old wind was blowing through the collieries, altering the approach to new labour as well as to the established workforce. While discipline became tighter, training was taken less seriously than ever. Many mines used the fact that new miners were now arriving in dribs and drabs (rather than in the large transports of earlier years) to ignore the OBAD guidelines altogether.⁴ Colliery officials put their trust not in careful training but in aggressive management. Unions noted a growing number of cases where

¹ HStad NW73, 458, LAA, Memo concerning meeting with Generaldirektor Kost on 7.2.1949, 8.2.1949.

² OBADA I8010/386/49, OBAD report for 4th Q. 1948.

³ See, for example, H.H.Bischoff, 'Arbeiterzahl und Arbeiterwechsel im Steinkohlenbergbau', *Glückauf*, 1949, 85, 49/50, pp.911-913.

⁴ OBADA I6307/2420/48, OBAD, Circular to BA, 16.9.1948.

mines were paying the newcomers less than the minimum wage in order to force up output.¹ The Ruhr wage arbitrators (Gedinge-Inspektoren) reported many instances where newcomers were being set to work in conditions which completely outstretched their abilities, despite the availability of experienced men working in easier conditions,² and complained repeatedly that the newcomers were not being given enough training.³

However, the drive to assert managerial authority was not the only new current in 1948. Both unions and OBAD pressed for greater emphasis on training and safety than in previous years. In autumn 1948, the Inspectorate argued that any additional hirings would constitute an unacceptable threat to mine safety.⁴ In September, it sent out a circular to the local offices of the Inspectorate urging vigilance in the training question and reminding them that the training directors could be prosecuted for failure to ensure adherence to the OBAD guidelines.⁵ In some cases, the Inspectorate had already felt obliged to take this step. (Though this was in some ways unfair, it was also quite a shrewd move, since it effectively forced the mines to give the training director more responsibility.)⁶ The unions themselves were growing increasingly concerned about mines safety (though it is not always possible to distinguish between genuine fear of accidents and use of the safety argument as a way of restricting unwanted recruitment).⁷ 'Es geht nicht', wrote Siegfried Schroeder in the IVB's information sheet for union officials and works councillors, 'daß man

¹ DGBA File, 'Industrieverband Bergbau 1946-8. Tätigkeitsbericht', Monthly report for March 1948; File 'IGBergbau. Monatsberichte der IGBergbau 1949', Monthly report for April 1949.

² IGBEA BR5, Reports by the Wage Arbitrators for August & September 1948.

³ Ibid., October 1948.

⁴ OBAD report for 3rd Q. 1948.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ OBADA I6307/3264/48, DKBL Direktorium to OBAD, 23.12.1948, annex.

⁷ AZG File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung...'. Memo concerning meeting of the NRW mines Tarifausschuß, 28.1.1949, see comments of IGB representative Jarrek; IVB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1947*, section 'Grubensicherheit'; IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1948/9*, section 'Grubensicherheit'.

vollkommen berufsfremden Menschen zumutet, nach 3-4 verfahrenen Schichten selbständig und ohne jegliche Anleitung zu arbeiten.'¹

From Autumn 1948, the OBAD was involved in negotiations with employers' representatives and the union about introducing new training provisions. Quite apart from the interests of safety, the Inspectorate was very conscious that the status of the profession could be enhanced only if all entrants were required to run through a more thorough training programme.² As far as the existing regulations were concerned, their main weaknesses were, first and fundamentally, that the prescribed training was too short and covered too little of the miners' work. Thus, when trainees were assigned to a new workplace they often found themselves confronted with jobs or environments for which they were totally unprepared.³ Secondly, the fact that training could take place anywhere in the mine and that the underground manager (rather than the training director) was responsible for carrying it out, meant that the training was often purely notional. Trainees frequently found themselves working at a normal productive face within days of having been taken on.⁴

The new regulations, issued in May 1949, made good these earlier weaknesses and for the first time since the war really bound the mines to certain clear and reasonable minimum standards. This was proven by the great chorus of opposition with which the works managers greeted the new code. Its basic elements were that the new miner had to spend at least a month getting to know the environment as a general labourer underground, during which time he was

¹ Report from IVB Referat Neubergleute, Bochum, 27.9.1948 in IGB *Informationsblatt* 1948.

² OBADA I6307/374/49, OBAD, Memo concerning a meeting of the Oberbergamt on 25.10.1948; HStad Kalkum Bergamt Duisburg 181, OBAD to Betriebsführer-Vereinigung Hamborn-Oberhausen, 15.8.1949.

³ OBAD to Betriebsführer-Vereinigung Hamborn-Oberhausen, 15.8.1949; OBADA I6307/450/49, IVB to OBAD, 10.2.1949.

⁴ OBAD to Betriebsführer-Vereinigung Hamborn-Oberhausen, 15.8.1949.

to be supervised by experienced miners. Then he was to be trained for at least three months during at least two of which the trainee was to be employed on time rates. Special training faces were now compulsory for both the time-rate and the contract wage stages of training. The new miners were to be given a broad training covering all the face jobs - coal getting, packing and shifting the conveyors. Special attentions was to be paid to the particularly dangerous job of packing and recovering props. During the two months on time rates there should be no more than four miners to each experienced hewer, a ratio which could be increased to six during the training in contract wage. Perhaps the most significant provision, certainly the most controversial was that the training director was now fully responsible for the whole training period and answerable directly to the managing director (ie not to the underground or works manager). Both training director and works council were to be involved in drawing up a list of newcomers and making sure they got the proper training.¹

Even though it enjoyed union backing,² the OBAD would probably not have been able to push this code through against colliery opposition had it not been for the support given by influential circles within the DKBL. For the DKBL's Manpower and Training committee (AAA)³ there was much to be welcomed. The committee had long believed that the changed conditions of 1948 provided employers with the opportunity to improve the training and induction of new labour. In its earliest versions of Plan A, the DKBL stressed the need for the

¹ OBADA I6307/1316/49, Bestimmungen über Anlernung und Einsatz von Neubergleuten im Steinkohlenbergbau.

² OBADA I6307/1918/49, OBAD to BA Recklinghausen 1, 29.4.1949; I6307/1720/49, Minutes of meeting in dining room of Mine Friedrich-Heinrich, 11.7.1949.

³ Unfortunately the minutes of the committee for the period prior to 1953 are among the records which remain unreleased at the Mining Archive. Luckily, the records of a sort of pre-committee, the Arbeitsausschuß für Ausbildungsfragen (Arb.aus.f.A), which considered many training and manpower issues in advance of the main committee, have not been given to the Mining Archive and so are accessible. For the post-'53 period, the main committee's minutes can be found among the Federal Economics Ministry papers.

'assimilation [sic] and a planful [sic] training of the non-miners'.¹ The very large number of accidents involving new miners provided further economic and social grounds to induct the newcomers more carefully. Many of the ObaD's suggestions in fact derived from proposals which the DKBL, in recognition both of the need for tighter controls and of the impracticality of some of the 1947 provisions, had submitted in December 1948.²

The real opposition to the code came from the collieries' works managers. In district meetings of the DKBL, in the Verband Oberer Bergbeamten (VOB) and in specially convened works managers' committees, the colliery managers vented their spleens.³ The new code, they argued, 'soll unter allen Umständen zu Fall gebracht werden'.⁴ The tone adopted was unusual enough to make it clear that something fundamental was at stake. The regulations contradicted some of the managers' most cherished assumptions. They objected to the notion that induction was primarily a matter of transmitting knowledge and skills and argued that 'eine Erziehung zur Disziplin, Arbeitseinsatz und Leistung'⁵ was at least as important. It was surely an indication of the mines' management style and their attitude to new labour that in defending the emphasis on discipline

¹ The fate of the DKBL's translator is not known! See WWA S22 (OMGUS), BICO ERPSOC 11/95-2/3-4, DKBL document, Plan A, Essen 20.2.1948.

² OBADA I6307/374/49, OBAD to DKBL & IGB, 14.2.1949, annex Memo concerning AAA meeting on 1.12.1948.

Some of the ObaD's conditions went further, however, and the DKBL was a little worried about possible conflicts of interest between training director and works manager and felt that the scope of the former's responsibilities would have to be very tightly defined. The DKBL's training experts were most disappointed by the deadline for the creation of special training faces which, they felt, was so clearly unrealistic as to throw the whole code into a bad light. See Ges. Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß 1948-1958', Arb. aus. f. A Meetings, 12.4.1949, 21.7.1949.

³ BBA 10,594, Report on meeting of DKBL Bochum District, 18.6.1949; HStad Kalkum BA Duisburg 181, correspondence between Betriebsführervereinigungen Hamborn-Oberhausen and 'linker Niederrhein' and OBAD; OBADA I6307.1720/49, Minutes of meeting with Betriebsführervereinigung 'Linker Niederrhein', 11.7.1949; VOB, 'Stellungnahme zum Ausbildungsplan', *Bergfreiheit*, 1949, 14, 11, pp.23-24.

⁴ BBA 10,594, Report on meeting of DKBL Bochum District, 18.6.1949.

⁵ HStad Kalkum Bergamt Duisburg 181, Draft of a letter from Betriebsführervereinigung Hamborn-Oberhausen to OBAD, (eventually sent 25.7.1949).

they made no distinction between the wartime experiences with conscript labour and the approach to the adult trainees of the post-war period:¹

Die Erfahrungen der letzten 10 Jahre, die an den Grubenbeamten durch die Überweisung der verschiedenartigsten Arbeitskräfte einmalige Anforderungen stellten, haben gezeigt daß die Menschenführung ebenso wesentlich bei der Erziehung zum Bergmann ist wie die praktische Unterweisung.

Because they put their trust in the heavy hand rather than the training session, managers objected to the costs the OBAD rulings would incur. This applied particularly to the compulsory training faces. Managers argued too that they were unable to supply the necessary supervisors, thereby clearly but perhaps unwittingly revealing that they had failed to comply with the 1947 regulations.²

Apart from committing the mines to what they saw as an expensive and overindulgent training programme, the OBAD had also assaulted another cherished notion, namely that the Betriebsführer had complete freedom to dispose of labour as he wished. The OBAD was heavily criticised for the responsibility it gave the training director. Decisions about the length of training necessary and whether adequate supervision was being provided should, it was argued, be left with the works manager.³ In part what was at stake here was the desire to maintain complete flexibility so that the short term needs of coal production would always have priority. But it was also a question of prestige⁴. It was seen as an unacceptable infringement of the works manager's status that he should have to inform training directors of new miners taken on by the mine. The training director should inform himself.⁵ The

¹ Ibid.

² HStAD Kalkum BA Duisburg 181, OBAD to Betriebsführer-Vereinigung Hamborn-Oberhausen, 15.8.1949.

³ Draft of a letter from Betriebsführervereinigung Hamborn-Oberhausen to OBAD.

⁴ StaM BA Bottrop A18, 176, Arenberg to BA Bottrop, 15.10.1949.

⁵ OBADA I6307/1720/49, Minutes of meeting in dining room of Zeche Friedrich-Heinrich, 11.7.1949.

works council should also not be involved as this represented an equally unacceptable extension of its prerogatives.¹

The AAA's largely favourable stance on the one hand and the works managers' condemnation on the other revealed the existence of two schools of thought within mining. Mining's long-established authoritarian style with its sink-or-swim approach to new labour continued to dominate at the level of overseers and underground and works managers. They had nothing but contempt for a softer more safety-conscious approach and condemned the 'nebensächlicher Unterausschuß' of the DKBL which, without consulting the 'mit der Kohlenförderung betrauten Kreise', had had the temerity to agree to the ObaD's proposals.²

On the other hand, a new breed of training and manpower manager such as the Hibernia training director Dr Köker, the Gruppe Hamborn training director Senft and even more his successor, Dr. Steffen, and others, were looking for a different approach with greater emphasis on qualification and better management. For their part, they condemned the VOB's failure to listen to the training directors and to respond only to the wishes of works managers.³ The DKBL's top manpower expert, Dr. Ullrich continued to argue that the regulations were basically acceptable⁴ and at a conference of training directors in June 1949, the new code was praised for its clarity and simplicity in contrast with the old regulations.⁵ Both viewpoints often existed within the same management. Thus at the same time as Senft from the Gruppe Hamborn was one of the

¹ HStAD Kalkum BA Duisburg 181, Memo from Inspektion II, (Gruppe Hamborn), 4.7.1949.

² BBA 10, 594, Minutes of meeting of Bochum district of DKBL, 18.6.1949.

³ Ges. Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß', Minutes of Arb. aus. f. A meeting 18.11.1949.

⁴ Minutes of meeting in dining room of Zeche Friedrich-Heinrich, 11.7.1949; Minutes of Arb. aus. f. A meeting 18.11.1949; OBADA I2107/3231/49, Minutes of a meeting with directors of local inspectorates, 6.10.1949.

⁵ BBA 10, 594, Mine Friedrich der Große to Bergassessor Lange, 28.6.1949.

strongest supporters of the new code, it was a Gruppe Hamborn director, Schloms, who was one of its most militant opponents.¹ In the neighbouring mining company Diergardt-Mevissen, the training director found himself permanently at odds with the works managers.²

Because of DKBL and IGB³ backing, the OBAD was able to ride out the storm and adopt a much tougher tone towards its opponents than it was wont. The regulations remained in force.⁴ Within the collieries, however, it was clear that the training directors and other members of what might be called the progressive wing would have difficulties asserting themselves in the face of the established management style.

In practice, the newcomers continued to receive a very cursory preparation to the work. True, the newcomers were now obliged to spend at least one month as general labourers underground. However, many newcomers spent the month or two of general labouring without any proper supervision at all, with the result that they were exposed to accidents and learned very little.⁵ True, the mines were now obliged to train the youngsters in special training faces, but in fact these were often run suspiciously like their productive counterparts.⁶

One factor which made it hard for the mines to offer a more satisfactory induction programme was that they suffered from a shortage of training

¹ He was the chairman of the outspoken Betriebsführervereinigung Hamborn-Oberhausen.

² HStAD Kalkum BA Duisburg 181, BA Duisburg Verfügung 417/272, 16.8.1951 concerning training of new miners in Diergardt-Mevissen company.

³ The IVB was renamed the 'Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau' at the end of 1948.

⁴ They were, however, somewhat vitiated by the many concession which the OBAD extended to mines who claimed it was impossible to implement them fully in the short term (even in August 1951, the OBAD was still prepared to express 'stillschweigendes Einverständnis' towards mines who had not yet established training faces). See HStAD Kalkum BA Duisburg 181, BA Duisburg to Gelsenberg 28.6.1951 and subsequent memos.

⁵ See, for instance, BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, annex 5 to III A 1 - 10934/56, 'Alarm im Bergbau'.

⁶ Ibid.

personnel. Even with their expanded number of classes, it would take the Mining Schools years to train all the deputies that the collieries needed.¹ But the poor training represented far more deep-seated attitudes towards industrial relations and production. There was an almost total lack of awareness of pedagogical and human relations issues.

In 1956 a young theology student produced a report based on his experiences in mining, entitled 'Alarm im Bergbau'.² The report begins by describing the typical newcomers' entry into the mine. Neither the new colleagues nor the foremen show much sympathy for the newcomer, who finds himself entrusted with moving coal tubs around at a staple shaft and cannot quite cope with the pace with which they are coming at him, particularly as one of the points is sticky.³

Mit seiner armseligen Grubenlampe steht der Neue im Scheinwerferlicht des Blitzers, der von der Brust des Rutschenbaß's auf ihn herableuchtet. Im Scheinwerferlicht sieht der Rutschenbaß die Wagen neben den Schienen liegen und nun ist es vorbei. "Sag mal", brüllt er los, "lernst Du das hier denn überhaupt nicht, bist sicher auch nur hierher gekommen, weil sonst keiner etwas mit Dir anzufangen weiß. Hast sicher geglaubt, hier wäre Platz für so blöde Hunde wie Du einer bist. So etwas kann auch nur aus Bayern kommen!"

Hardly has one foreman disappeared, then another surfaces, and screams at the newcomer for not having got enough coal tubs together. The account is then interrupted and we rejoin the trainee some weeks later when he has begun to come to terms with the work. His problem now is that, though working in moist conditions, he is not given a chit for a rubber suit by the deputy. By the time the suit finally arrives, the hapless recruit is already ill. It is enough to drive him from the mines for good.⁴

¹ WBKA, WBK (ed.), 'Verwaltungsbericht 1.1.49-31.12.49'; BBA 55, 12200, Nr.11. Minutes of Bergausschuß meeting, 22.8.1950.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, BWIM, Memo, ref III A 1 - 10934/56, annex 5.

³ Ibid., p.8.

⁴ Ibid., p.11.

Leaving the fate of this particular individual, the report goes on to consider more general problems in the approach to the new miners. Apart from the personality of the deputies, the whole system is not geared up to taking the newcomers' needs seriously. The lack of preparation is overwhelming. The newcomers have themselves to ask for protective clothing and no one tells them that they should have it. Because high output is demanded from on high, the instructors, even when well meaning, have no time to respond to the inexperienced newcomers' difficulties. Packing, coal-getting, recovering props - all these jobs are demonstrated in a few minutes at the beginning of the shift and the newcomers then left to get on with it. And when the newcomer finally finds himself in the productive faces, kümmert sich erst recht keiner mehr um den Neuen'.¹

Probably the most impressive thing about this report was not its content, but the fact that no one disputed its veracity. At a meeting of the Manpower and Training Committee in 1956, no one present - as far as we can tell from the minutes - criticised the paper. No one even said that it was exaggerated. Instead there was a consensus that 'Alarm im Bergbau..ohne Zweifel für einen großen Teil der Zechen zutreffen (dürfte)'.² Other accounts from new miners certainly confirm the general picture.³

The available accident statistics suggest strongly that the newcomers were not being adequately prepared for mining work (see fig. 7). Any improvements in the safety of the first few months of employment as a result of the OBAD code were being more than outweighed by a higher rate of accidents among the trainees in their second and third year of employment,⁴ probably because of

¹ Ibid, p.26.

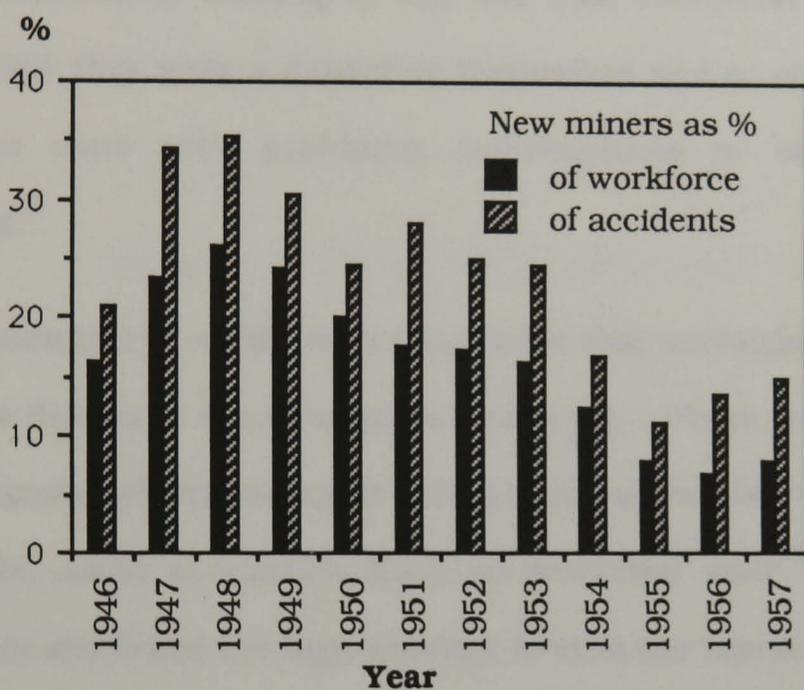
² BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, AAA Meeting, 30.5.1956.

³ See, for instance, Herbert Berger, 'Als Neuling im Pütt', in IGBE (ed.), *Bergleute erzählen. (Beiträge zur Geschichte der IGBE)*, Bochum 1982, pp.29-35.

⁴ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 21395, Memo, 'New miners and invalidity problems', table 10, new miner share of accidents.

more intensive working and more one-man contract wage employment.¹ In 1952, a greater proportion of Hibernia new miners were involved in accidents than in 1948.² The failure to protect the new miners came out even more clearly in the figures of another company which established that new miners in their first five years of employment were four times more likely to be involved in accidents than apprentices with equivalent mining experience.³

Fig. 7: Workforce and accident share of trainees with less than three years experience⁴



As well as being a danger to themselves, the new miners' lack of knowledge also impinged on mine safety as a whole. 'Wie wenig Können zum Beispiel ein gewisser Prozentsatz der Strebbelegschaften noch aufweist', observed the management of the mine Friedrich der Große, 'zeigt wiederholt das Einbringen des Ausbaues (falsche Lage der Quetschhölzer, Fehlen von Bolzen, schiefwinkliger Neigung der Stempel zum Einfallen, verzögertes Stellen der Baue usw)'.⁵

¹ IGBEA T4, Dr.Köcker lecture Jan 1953.

² Ibid.

³ BBA 10, 135, Memo for Herrn Bergrat Heintzmann, Herne 4.4.1955.

⁴ Source: Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1958*, annex 14.

⁵ Ibid.

In effect, the new miners were learning the bare minimum necessary to enable them to mine coal. The face, where the trainees were most heavily concentrated, approached 1938 productivity levels far faster than other parts of the mine. By 1952, coal getting (Gewinnung) in the Hibernia company was more efficient than it had been in 1938; face work as a whole (Abbau) was 90 percent as productive as it had been pre-war but for the underground workforce as a whole the figure was only 73.5 percent.¹ Trainees who stayed in mining were therefore not depressing productivity (although the high wastage and the resulting large number of trainees in training at any one time continued to be a negative factor).² But they were a danger to themselves and to others and were ill equipped to cope with problems, interruptions or other unexpected eventualities.³

It was symptomatic of management attitudes that accidents were frequently attributed to defects in the newcomers' character. There was something of a consensus among colliery managers that the 'charakterlichen Eigenschaften der Neubergleute...nicht sonderlich hoch zu bewerten sind'.⁴ A Concordia memorandum attributed the high accident level to the new miners' 'mangelnde Arbeitsmoral' and complained that the newcomers:⁵

sich nichts sagen lassen wollen. Wenn Sie kurze Zeit im Bergbau gearbeitet haben, kommen sie sich als alte Bergleute vor, glauben nach eigenem Ermessen handeln zu können und lehnen Ratschläge und Belehrungen von Kamaraden, aber auch Anordnungen von Vorgesetzten ab, oder lassen sie unbeachtet.

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 4363, lecture from Dr.Köcker given to members of the Arbeitsausschuß, 19.1.1953.

² Ibid.

³ BBA 8/448, Memo about discussions between CCCG and mine directors of DKBL district Niederrhein, 19.9.1949. Discussions before arrival of CCCG reps.

⁴ HStAD Kalkum BA Duisburg 181. Copy of memo from Inspektion II to Direktion III (Gruppe Hamborn), 4.7.1949.

⁵ BBA 8, 352, Memo from Arbeiterpersonalbüro, 12.7.1952.

No doubt, there was something to this. Young men are more likely to take risks than older colleagues, newcomers less knowledgeable than long-established workers. But in truth the new miners could not be expected to behave in any other way when they were given so little proper training and expected to work independently, almost from the beginning. The collieries' perfunctory approach to induction *encouraged* the notion that the trainee did not have all that much to learn. What should the newcomer think when, for instance, travelling on the conveyor was forbidden by mine safety rules and yet everybody from the overman downwards did it?¹ In addition, the newcomers were often informed about safety regulations only *after* an avoidable accident had taken place.²

Ultimately, the biggest cost of this approach was the high wastage among the newcomers. Management had, just as in earlier times, not tried at all to make the experience of work more acceptable to new labour. Efforts to integrate new labour were restricted almost exclusively to housing and other measures outside the work process. Yet in the labour market conditions of the post-war period, this was not enough.³

New labour between management and the established workforce

In 1948 and 1949, however, it seemed as if colliery managers had largely succeeded in imposing their will on the conditions of entry for new labour. The recruits entering the mines were now young, fit men who found themselves in a much tougher working environment than had their predecessors a year earlier.

¹ Cf. 'Alarm im Bergbau'.

² Ibid.

³ See below, p.328ff.

Even the problem of wastage seemed to be being solved; losses in 1949 were lower than at any time since the end of the war.¹

Were colliery managers successful also at using new labour and the 'reserve army' beyond the factory gates as a means of disciplining the established workforce? In the 19th century, the constant influx of new labour had, at least in the short term, been a key factor in depressing wage levels and weakening the workforce's power to resist management. Did this apply also to the period after 1945?

Union and new labour

Ever since 1947, the IVB had grown increasingly concerned at the impact new labour was having on its own position and its members' interests.² Above all, the presence of thousands of outsiders to the Ruhr, perched in their hostels and with few contacts in the workforce, appeared to the union to create a potential division in the workforce, which employers would be able to exploit.³ Trade union organisation was lower in the hostels than among any other group of miners. According to one survey in 1948, barely more than 50 percent of hostel occupants were unionised.⁴

Moreover, there was ample evidence that even without employer intervention, new miners were endangering the interests of the established workforce.

¹ *Glückauf*, 1949, 85,4 9/50, pp.911-913, here p.913.

² For the growing concern about Neubergleute, see IGB Bezirk I (ed.), *Geschäftsbericht für das Jahr 1948*, Oberhausen 1949; IG Bergbau Bezirk IV Bochum (ed.), *Jahresberichte 1947-1948 zur Bezirkstagung 1949*, Bochum 1949; IG Bergbau Bezirk V (ed.), *3. Bezirkskonferenz der IG Bergbau, Bezirk V, in Gelsenkirchen Buer, 13.3.1949. Jahresbericht 1948*, Gelsenkirchen 1949.

³ For a succinct, though somewhat later statement of this anxiety, see the speech of Siegfried Schroeder in IG BEA Pressearchiv, File 'Arbeitskräfte für den Bergbau. Neubergleute. Bis 1952', Minutes of the 3rd conference of new miner hostel reps. 17.7.1950.

⁴ IG BEA BR4, H. Gutermuth, Report of the works councils division for the 1948 annual report, no date.

Several cases of newcomers found smoking underground graphically illustrated the threat presented by undisciplined, ill-informed recruits.¹ Group earnings were affected by newcomers' absenteeism and under-production.² Yet the IVB believed the importance of avoiding a permanent split in the workforce to be so great that it refused to sanction punitive action against the newcomers and was at pains to stress educational work and persuading the newcomers to alter their behaviour.³

These problems and anxieties manifested the fact that the miners were in many ways a group particularly vulnerable to the impact of new labour. More than almost any other working group, their lives depended on the maintenance of certain safety standards. Whilst it was true that misbehaving young trainees tended to endanger themselves more than anyone else, misdemeanours such as smoking in the mines put all their colleagues at risk. Secondly, the absence of formal skill barriers meant that the earnings, status and job security of the established workforce was easily affected by new recruitment. The capacity of new men to act as a reserve army was much greater than in industries where unskilled labour could be marginalised and the union could protect the privileges of core occupational groups. Finally, the existence at the faces of the group contract wage, in which the earnings of up to fifty men were dependent on their joint output, meant that even small groups of newcomers could upset the rhythms and norms of working life and the earnings of their colleagues.

The union's response to this situation was twofold. On the one hand, it began a much more energetic campaign to integrate new miners. A special officer was created to respond to the needs and wishes of new miners, particularly of those

¹ See chapter 3, p.147.

² BBA 32, 882, Report on meeting of production committee deputy-chairmen, 25.6.1947; Föllmer-Edling, 'Die Politik des IVB', p.80.

³ BBA 32, 882, Report on meeting of production committee deputy-chairmen, 25.6.1947; chapter 3, p.134, fn 2.

living in the camps.¹ Trainees who had found lodgings or came from local towns 'galten als verschmolzen' and were not the object of the same degree of interest.² The local branch secretaries received a series of instructions to take the newcomers more seriously.³ The union press was full of exhortations to the locals to take a greater interest in the outsiders.⁴ The IVB encouraged the camps to elect camp representatives and organised a first conference of the *Lagersprecher* at the end of 1947.⁵

On the other hand, it became progressively more open in its opposition to additional recruitment. In May 1948, the union published a statement on this question on the first page of the main union journal, 'Die Bergbau-Industrie'.⁶ The statement was remarkable for avoiding making a single clear point, nevertheless the fact that it was there proved that the union was already worried. In June, an American investigating team commented that 'it is reliably reported and quite apparent that considerable resentment is felt against the "outsiders"...There is a very real fear of the possible future competition for jobs by those who can remember former periods of unemployment and low wages'.⁷ Towards the end of the year, the IVB's pronouncements were more clearly - though not yet decisively - hostile to large-scale recruitment.⁸ By 1949,

¹ Interview with Siegfried Schroeder, 18.2.1984; IVB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1947*, section: 'Neubergleute'.

² Interview with Siegfried Schroeder, 18.2.1984.

³ Witness the new attention devoted to new miners in the local district reports. See p.313, fn.2.

⁴ 'Die Aufgaben der neugewählten Betriebsräte. Vordringlich ist die Sicherheit - Hilft den Neubergleuten', *Die Bergbau-Industrie*, 1948, 1, 18, pp.1-2; Dahmann, 'Der Sozialbeauftragte im Bergbau..', *Die Bergbau-Industrie*, 1948, 1, 2, p.2; Tisa Hess, 'Kameradschaft - das Gesetz unserer Zeit...', *Die Bergbau-Industrie*, 1948, 1, 1, p.3. 'Weihnachten 1948. Kameradschaft und Gastfreundschaft im Kohlenpott..', *Die Bergbau-Industrie*, 1948, 1, 22, p.1.

⁵ IVB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1947*, section Neubergleute: 'Schulung der Neubergleute', *Die Bergbau-Industrie*, 1949, 2, 9, p.1.

⁶ 'Stellungnahme des Vorstandes des IVBergbau zur Anwerbung von Neubergleuten', *Die Bergbau-Industrie*, 1948, 1, 7, p.1.

⁷ Special Intelligence Report, 'Some German views of the political, economic and sociological aspects of Ruhr coal mining', 19.6.1948, op.cit.

⁸ 'Weitere 200,000 Bergleute notwendig?', *Die Bergbau-Industrie*, 1948, 1, 19, p.6.

with the future market for coal temporarily very uncertain,¹ the union had moved to outright opposition.²

Because the union was unable to influence the collieries' recruitment policy directly, it tried to find indirect means to restrict entry to the workforce. One such method was to reduce the incentives offered to new labour. It was noteworthy that the main renegotiations of adult trainees' pay took place at the beginning of 1949, just after various experts, among them the NRW Economics Minister, had predicted that the market for German coal might soon contract.³ The prospect of mass redundancies came a little nearer. To deter adult recruits and create the climate for a change in recruitment policy, the IGB⁴ organised a press conference in February proclaiming that the day of mass recruitment was over and to warn of imminent changes in the energy market.⁵ At the same time it wrote to the OBAD calling for new and more restrictive conditions for the induction and deployment of adult trainees.⁶

When it came to the negotiating table, however, the union proved, as we have seen, unable to make any fundamental changes to the wage incentives offered new trainees, not only because of the employers' stance but also because the union found itself hampered by the recognition that it could not afford to ignore the newcomers' interests.⁷ In the first place, the union wanted to integrate

¹ OBADA I8010/1914/49, OBAD Lagebericht for 2nd Q. 1949.

² 'Bergarbeiter-Werbung überflüssig', *Wiesbadener Kurier*, 10.2.1949; 'Gestern zu wenig - übermorgen vielleicht zu viel Kohle', *Rhein-Ruhr Zeitung*, 11.2.1949.

³ 'Bergarbeiter-Werbung überflüssig'; 'Gestern zu wenig - übermorgen vielleicht zu viel Kohle'.

⁴ The IVB changed its name to Industrie-Gewerkschaft Bergbau at the end of 1948.

⁵ See the two newspaper reports above and 'Neubergleute nicht mehr gefragt. Die Wunde des Ruhrgebiets: 15.000 Arbeitslose', *Welt am Sonntag*, 13.2.1949.

⁶ OBADA I6307/450/49, IGB to OBAD, 10.2.1949.

⁷ In a key meeting on 11 March, for example, the union felt obliged to ensure that 'genügend Anreiz' was offered the newcomers. See AZG File "61" [=I 1 61], 'Bezahlung der Neubergleute bzw Umschüler'. Undated memo concerning meeting of Tarifausschuß on 11.3.1949.

existing new labour and could not afford to leave it unprotected. Secondly, any wage ruling affecting new labour was also likely to impinge on the workforce as a whole. The absence of a skill barrier meant that it was impossible to discriminate against the newcomers. The best example of this came when the employers, led by Mittelviehhaus, opposed retaining the training supplement for trainees. The supplement was indeed discarded in the new ruling but the union ensured that the newcomers were now covered by the minimum wage clause from the very beginning of their contract wage employment, so that protection was very nearly as good.¹

The union therefore had to find another means of limiting newcomers' access and it saw this in new training regulations. The IGB saw a lengthy training period as a powerful means to reduce the number of willing recruits and the pace at which they gained access to the workforce. It would in effect create a skill barrier, protecting the established workforce from the reserve army beyond the pit gates. Accordingly the IGB wrote to the OBAD in February 1949 arguing, 'daß das gesamte Bergumschülerwesen einer Neugestaltung bedarf, schon allein um dafür zu sorgen, daß der ortsansässige Bergarbeiternachwuchs nicht gegenüber den Umschülern schlechtergestellt wird.'² The union made the suggestion that all newcomers should spend an entire year in the mines as general labourers before being allowed to train at the face.³ Here too, however, the IGB was unable to assert its wishes. It found much to welcome in the new training code but it had not been able to establish a genuine skill barrier.

¹ Ibid.

² OBADA I6307,450,49, IGB Abt. Angestellte to OBAD, 10.2.1949.

³ OBADA I6307/1918/49, OBAD to BA Recklinghausen, 29.4.1949; I6307/1720/49, Minutes of meeting in the dining room of Mine Friedrich Heinrich, 11.7.1949.

Sources of union power

The fact is, however, that despite the very favourable labour supply position and despite the absence of entry barriers for new recruits, the established labour force did not really suffer from the reserve army of unemployed.

At central level a key reason for this was that both the state and the employers had good reasons for courting the IGB, reasons that were barely affected by the labour market situation. The state, in the form of the labour administration and the NRW regional ministries proved in many different circumstances to be very concerned to win the support of organised labour. Relations between the NRW government and the DKBL, which Karl Arnold and his colleagues seem to have regarded as a state within a state, usurping powers rightly belonging to regional government, were poor.¹ When they took these disputes to Frankfurt,² later to Bonn, the NRW ministries wanted to know they had the union's support.³ Since the cabinet was in a number of areas more socially minded than the employers, there was a natural basis for agreement, despite the fact that the cabinet was largely Christian Democrat, while the union was dominated by the SPD.⁴

For its part, the DKBL had equally good reasons not to drive the IGB into open opposition. For a start, there were union nominees within the DKBL itself, who had some influence on the organisation's policies. Far more important, however, was the importance of maintaining a closed front vis à vis the Allies.

¹ On disputes in the housing question, see HStad NW53, 643, WAM to NRW Minister-Präsident, 14.7.1948; Minister-Präsident to Bishop, NRW Regional Commissioner, 24.7.1958; Landrat Ernst to Arnold, 18.8.1948.

² BAK Z13, 198, 'Protokoll über die von der VFW - Abt. Bergbau - einberufene Sitzung', 15.6.1948.

³ See for instance HStad NW73, 47, WAM to IVB, 28.10.1948.

⁴ Again housing provides a good example, here, with cabinet commitment to ending the link between house and job contract in conflict with the employers' desire to retain this additional hold over the workforce. See HStad NW10,83, WAM III B 5 305, Memo, 3.4.1951 and chapter 9.

The DKBL was in a different position to colliery managers. The managers, growing more secure in their positions by the day, were prepared to take an aggressive line against labour. The DKBL leadership, on the other hand, though sympathising with the managers, needed IGB support if it was to prevent Allied proposals for a reorganisation of the mining industry. From the middle of 1949, the IGB was closely involved in the formulation of alternative German proposals.¹ In other words, at the local level, the Allies ceased to represent a threat; at higher levels, the employers (and indeed the Federal government) still needed union cooperation to have a strong hand in negotiations.²

New labour for old

The best example of the effects of this situation was the question of mass redundancies. The approach of the currency reform and the worsening of the collieries' financial situation in summer 1948 induced many employers to draw up plans for mass redundancies.³ The pressure on them to do so came not only from their own balance sheets but also from the UK/USCCG. Conscious of the industry's financial problems, the Coal Control Group urged the collieries to cut back on unproductive elements in the workforce.⁴ Apart from such financial considerations, the employers may well have believed that showing their readiness to engage in mass sackings would make the remaining members of the established workforce more compliant and efficient. Evidence that the colliery managements felt ready to adopt aggressive and unpopular policies is provided by the contract wage negotiations at the time of the currency reform, when with

¹ Abelshauser, *Ruhrkohlenbergbau*, p.52ff.

² A fact clearly demonstrated in the government's decision to support codetermination in iron and steel. See Abelshauser, *Ruhrkohlenbergbau*, p.61.

³ 'Sechs Jahre Aussenstelle Bergbau', p.71.

⁴ Eg. BBA 35,51, Meeting of the Bochum District of the DKBL on 29.4.1948.

the sanction of Military Government, many mines tried for the first time to force wage/output norms back to their pre-war levels.¹

The question was whether the unions would be able to do anything about this, or whether the reserve army of willing labour had undermined union power. There was little doubt that few miners wanted to take retirement. Though wages had been increased in June 1948, Knappschaft payments had not, so that pensions stood in no relation to earnings.²

Mass sackings were prevented, however, by two factors. In the first place, labour exchange approval continued to be required for redundancies and the labour administration remained conscious of its responsibilities towards the labour force.³ Secondly, the DKBL proved willing to compromise on the issue. A special committee was set up by the ABB, IVB and DKBL to consider how the employers should react to the changed labour market situation since the currency reform. The committee agreed that mass redundancies should not be undertaken. In cases where they seemed necessary, the committee had to be involved.⁴ The ABB advised all labour exchanges in mining areas of their powers to prevent mass redundancies.⁵

As a result the number of redundancies remained within limits, though it is hard to identify exactly how many workers were affected. The mines' statistics listing those retired from the mines for reasons of old age or ill health (see table 14), were probably not comprehensive, but do at least indicate that the post-

¹ See BBA 10, 594, DKBL, Bezirk Bochum, Circular to mining directors, 26.6.1948; IVB Hauptvorstand, Circular, 7.7.1948.

² Willy Siebert, 'Der Umschichtungsprozeß der Belegschaften im westdeutschen Steinkohlenbergbau', (Dissertation, Münster University, 1953), p.120ff.

³ 'Sechs Jahre Aussenstelle Bergbau', p.72; the DKBL itself pointed out in response to Mil.Gvt. pressure that it was proving very difficult to sack miners. See BBA 35,51, Minutes of meeting of DKBL Bochum District, 29.4.1948.

⁴ 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', pp.72-3.

⁵ *Ibid.* For an example of the labour exchanges' intervention, see BBA 55, 12200, Nr.11, Minutes of meeting on 24.2.1950.

currency reform period was not characterised by exceptional redundancies. Only 1950 was well above the average for the following period. One reason for the increase in that year seems to have been the modest improvement in Knappschaft payments in mid-1949 which made both miners and employers more willing to consider retirement.¹ The other was the large pay rise negotiated by the IGB at the beginning of 1950 which put pressure on collieries to reduce their wages bill and perhaps also inclined them to disregard union sentiment in the redundancy question.²

Table 14: Losses due to ill health and old age³

<u>Year</u>	<u>Below ground</u>	<u>All workers</u> ⁴
1947	2,698	n.g.
1948	3,388	6,166
1949	4,559	8,156
1950	6,857	12,224
1951	4,971	8,675
1952	5,298	9,329
1953	5,987	10,715
1954	6,514	11,922
1955	3,614	7,134
1956	3,088	6,250
1957	4,139	7,715

Another piece of evidence supporting the idea that losses remained within reasonable limits comes from the annual statistics on the workforce's age structure. The industry's records divide the workforce into five-year cohorts so that by comparing the numbers in, say, the 51-55 age group in 1946 with the 56-60 cohort five years later, we can calculate what proportion of the 51-55 year olds had been removed or had left the underground workforce in the intervening period (see table 15).

¹ 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.92.

² BBA 55, 12200, Nr.11, Minutes of Bergausschuß meeting, 27.1.1950.

³ Source: Ges.Verb., StdKW, table 'Aufteilung des Abganges nach Gründen - Arbeiter insgesamt. Ruhr' and same for workers underground. Figures until 1954 include deaths at work, which averaged about 1,000 a year.

⁴ The significance of losses above ground was that few underground miners were made redundant directly. Normally, as they got older, they were transferred to less demanding and lower paid jobs above ground. This had a knock-on effect, forcing other older miners above ground into full retirement.

Table 15: Wastage and retention among selected age groups(Percent of selected age cohorts appearing in higher cohort five years later) ¹

<u>cohort</u>	<u>period:</u>						
	<u>1946-51</u>	<u>1947-52</u>	<u>1948-53</u>	<u>1949-54</u>	<u>1950-5</u>	<u>1951-6</u>	<u>1952-7</u>
41-45	95.48	88.94	82.53	80.72	81.88	82.77	84.59
46-50	81.16	76.85	73.41	71.74	72.91	73.69	75.27
51-55	67.91	65.74	62.10	59.05	59.52	61.81	63.83
56-60	48.17	47.28	43.34	37.82	38.25	39.78	38.83

This table confirms the view that attrition amongst the higher age groups was not abnormally high at the end of the 1940's. For example, 67.91 percent of the men who had made up the 51-55 cohort in 1946 were still working underground in 1951 (- now, of course, in the 56-60 group). The attrition was actually lower then than during the 1950's.²

Thus workforce rejuvenation was prevented from being an explosive issue and the employers accepted that rejuvenation would take place more slowly than direct cost and productivity considerations made desirable. For their part, union representatives and works councillors generally took a balanced view and accepted the need for some redundancies.³ The cost of this consensus was the slower pace at which the workforce was regenerated. In particular, the jobs away from the face came to be heavily occupied by older miners and the mines faced a persistent problem of increasing productivity outside the core area of contract wage employment.⁴

This is not to say that the labour market situation had no influence on the union's position. Between June 1948 and the beginning of 1950 there were no pay increases in the mines. It may well be that the IGB felt the price of the

¹ Calculated from *ZdKW*, 7,p.38;16,p.47;26,p.47 & 39,p.50.

² These calculations depend on the assumption that no new labour joined the mines in this age range. However, in 1946-7, a small number of former miners who had been POW's and were in their 40's, some perhaps in their 50's, did rejoin the mines. The numbers involved are unlikely to make much difference to these calculations.

³ Eg BBA 35, 237, Minutes of union meeting at mine Emscher Lippe, 3.4.1949. Comments of branch chairman Böing.

⁴ See, for instance, Hibernia's productivity figures, in Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1958*, annex 14.

compromise in the redundancy question was restraint on pay. Even if that were the case, however, the fact is that the IGB was in general terms not radically affected by the labour market. Moreover, the 1950 - 1952 period saw several sizeable pay increases.

At the colliery level, the situation was somewhat different, since the recognition that union support was necessary to deal with the Allies did not impinge on labour relations within the mine. There are in fact a number of signs that a major shift of power away from the workers' representatives and back to management did take place in the mines between 1948 and the early 1950's. After the war, works councillors had managed to achieve powers of codetermination or veto over a very wide range of affairs; in some mines they even had a say in the appointment of senior management.¹ These powers were progressively reduced after 1948 and communications from management to works councils reveal a progressively more self-confident and aggressive tone.² As early as February 1948, the union began to complain that the managers were 'zunehmend aggressiv in ihrem Vorgehen gegen Arbeiter'.³ But there were a whole host of other reasons why works councillors were unable to stand in the way of management's renewed self-confidence, not least the end of denazification, the withdrawal of Allied influence and the power to the deputies' elbows provided by the restoration of a stable currency.⁴ At most the labour market was a minor contributory factor in shifting the balance of power.

¹ See IGBE Bezirk Ruhr Nord, Recklinghausen (ed.), *Jahre die wir nicht vergessen 1945-1950. Recklinghäuser Bergbaugewerkschaftler erinnern sich*, Recklinghausen 1980; BBA 32, 740, Minutes of directors' meeting, 8.8.1947.

² See the lament of the works' council at Friedrich der Große colliery, in BBA 10, 507, Betriebsrat to Verwaltung, 29.4.1949;

³ DGBA File 'Industrieverband Bergbau 1946-1948. Tätigkeitsberichte', Monthly report for February 1948.

⁴ In its first report after the currency reform the OBAD was already able to report on the miners' increased commitment to higher earnings and output. See OBADA 18010/2924/48, Report for 3rd Q. 1948.

The unreserved army

What about the newcomers themselves? Were they prepared to accept worse conditions than the established men? In the years immediately following the currency reform some new miners were accused of willingness to accept whatever the deputies cared to give them and a sociological investigation into pit life in 1950 found that the small group of individuals who claimed to be completely indifferent to the way management dealt with them were, without exception, new miners. Older expellees, in particular, were often anxious not to lose their jobs and consequently kept their heads down.¹

It was not just a question of lower standards. New labour's lack of ties to local community and profession often made it hard for unions or the established workforce to transmit the norms of working life. As in the pre-currency reform period, there continued to be a youthful element among the newcomers determined to do as little work as possible, which naturally aroused resentment.² At the same time there was also a sizeable group who worked too hard. The men responsible either were thinking of spending only a couple of years in mining and so were not concerned about long-term effects on their health, or had lost everything in the war or its aftermath and were now hell-bent on building up a home.³ There were two ways in which this could have a deleterious effect on the workforce. In the first place there was the so-called wage scissors effect: higher output led to renegotiation of the piece- or contract-rate by management so that, in future, earning the same wage would require more effort.⁴ Secondly, the other workers on the face came under pressure to fit

¹ Jantke, *Bergmann und Zeche*, p.57.

² *Ibid.*, p.46, p.75 and appendices.

³ Rudolf Schmitz, 'Das Gedinge, seine Bedeutung und seine Wirkung auf die zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen im Ruhrkohlenbergbau, (Dissertation, Münster University, 1952), pp.160-1.

⁴ Helmut Hohmann, 'Lagerleben und Einzelgedinge', in IGBE Bezirk Ruhr-Nord (ed.), *Jahre die wir nicht vergessen*, pp.165-171, here p.170.

in with the higher work-pace or to leave the face for lower paid work elsewhere in the pit. Older men in particular faced an agonising choice between taxing their health by working harder or accepting loss of earnings for the sake of easier work.¹

All these processes are observable and were commented on at the time. There is no doubt however, that the main impact of new labour was in the opposite direction. The newcomers generally forced standards up rather than down. Contemporaries may have complained about the compliant expellee; but they were just as likely to point out the contrary tendency amongst the younger expellees, namely that they stood up to the deputies and management with a resolution and an effectiveness that had been lacking in the community.² An investigation of the contract wage in the post-war period discovered that not infrequently it was new miners who through their self-confidence and ability to put across their point of view became the spokesmen of the entire face.³

Where did the confidence come from? The newcomers' standards were different. As outsiders they were less accustomed to the tone current within mining. Older miners were more resigned to the treatment handed out, and, on the positive side, showed more understanding for the deputies' difficulties and were often aware that behind a sharp word there was little real animosity.⁴ Many new

¹ The resentment of many older men at what they felt was inadequate union protection here emerges clearly in Bernd Parisius, 'Arbeiter zwischen Resignation und Integration. Auf den Spuren der Soziologie der 50er Jahre', in Niethammer (ed.), *"Hinterher merkt man.."*, pp.107-148.

² See Walter Köpping, 'Als Betriebsobmann auf "Julia" 1947-1949', in Walter Köpping (ed.), *Lebensberichte deutscher Bergarbeiter*, Oberhausen 1984, pp.404-407. Günther Eckerland, 'Lagersprecher', in *Ibid.*, pp.407-410; Arbeitskreis Stadtteilgeschichte Hochlarmark, 'Neubergleute in Recklinghausen-Hochlarmark 1945-1950', in *Ibid.*, pp.391-401, esp. p.398.

³ Schmitz, 'Gedinge', p.158f. The point was indirectly confirmed by Hans Walter, a senior wage arbitrator, who drew attention to the fact that young inexperienced newcomers frequently became face spokesmen. See Hans Walther, 'Zehn Jahre Gedingeschlichtung im westdeutschen Steinkohlenbergbau', *Glückauf*, 1958, 94, 43/44, pp.1537-1546.

⁴ Jantke, *Bergmann u Zeche* cited in Fronz & Peter, *Der Steiger*, p.22ff.

miners and, in particular, many expellees came from non-working class backgrounds. According to SoFoSt records, around 20 percent of expellees taken on in the '45-48 period had formerly been in white collar, managerial or professional occupations or self-employed.¹ and they were used to a quite different approach to human relations.² Their unwillingness to put up with the rough, patriarchal treatment of the mining industry was shared by the not inconsiderable number of new men who had held positions of responsibility and authority in the army.³

Far more important than their willingness to stand up and fight, however, was the newcomers' willingness to leave. As young and often single men they were less tied to the mines than the established workforce and for the reasons outlined above were often less willing to put up with the conditions in mining. In addition, at no point in the post-currency reform period does there seem to have been any great anxiety about obtaining employment elsewhere. This is a reminder that, although much higher elsewhere, unemployment in NRW never went above 5 percent.⁴ In addition, many newcomers probably drew strength from the sort of wartime and post-war experiences described by Lutz Niethammer.⁵ Many had made the most incredible odysseys, first as retreating soldiers, then as discharged soldiers or ex-POWs trudging hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles till they found their families, then further great treks with or without the family westwards in search of work. No doubt there were plenty

¹ Calculation from Croon, *Zeche und Gemeinde*, p.296.

² Interview with Walther Köpping, on 16.8.1983; Eckerland, 'Lagersprecher'.

³ Arbeitskreis Stadtteilgeschichte Hochlarmark, 'Neubergleute'.

⁴ Calculated from *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 1955, pp.114-5.

⁵ Niethammer, Lutz, 'Heimat und Front. Versuch, zehn Kriegserinnerungen aus der Arbeiterklasse des Ruhrgebiets zu verstehen', in Niethammer (ed.), *"Die Jahre weiß man nicht."*, pp.163-232.

who now hankered after stability, indeed it is hard otherwise to see why so many stayed in the mines, but they were, by and large, not frightened of moving.

In 1949, the mines had believed themselves on the way to workforce stability. But within 12 months, the level of labour losses was causing widespread anxiety within the industry. True, there was until 1952 little problem in finding replacements, but few of those replacements seemed ready to stay long once they had experienced mining at first hand. In 1950, the mines found for the first time that in summer months they lost contract wage workers faster than they could prepare trainees and apprentices.¹ By then, with the Korea boom beginning, the mines needed every man they could get. If there had been a 'reserve army' effect in mining at all, it was certainly over by summer 1950.

It should be noted, however, that this wastage was far from suiting the miners' union. Certainly, the unwillingness of newcomers to stay strengthened the IGB's hand at the negotiating table. But the costs for safety and morale, the problems of organising the newcomers and persuading them of the virtues of the union and the costs, too, to mining's status all deeply disturbed the union leadership and made them more committed than ever to apprentices rather than adults.²

¹ Anton Große Boymann, 'Zur Frage der Leistung im Steinkohlenbergbau', *Glückauf* 1951, 87. 17/18, pp.420-423, here p.421.

² See chapter 9, p.439ff.

2: The struggle for labour

Table 16: Underground workforce size, intake and wastage 1948-58¹

<u>Year</u>	<u>workforce size</u> <u>(on Jan 1st)</u>	<u>intake</u> <u>(excluding movement</u> <u>from pit to pit)</u>	<u>labour loss</u>	<u>Movement from</u> <u>pit to pit</u>
1948	240,101	62,688	51,900	8,528
1949	253,531	62,189	43,503	10,970
1950	273,972	55,328	51,976	16,511
1951	278,306	61,779	56,514	22,041
1952	287,692	62,417	57,494	23,577
1953	299,099	59,320	59,181	24,297
1954	307,145	34,440	50,120	18,217
1955	300,308	43,834	53,224	23,478
1956	300,166	53,233	54,704	28,834
1957	308,162	51,602	57,886	25,591
1958	312,185	28,316	52,073	19,494

The costs of wastage

By 1953, mining's high labour demand was caused almost exclusively by wastage. The UVR made an advance calculation of labour requirements for the following year and reckoned that in order to increase the workforce by 3,000 men, 61,000 recruits would be needed!² At the end of 1953, the general downswing in economic activity temporarily reduced the flight from the mines but in autumn 1954, wastage resumed its upward path and consistently outpaced the level of hirings.³

The costs of this wastage were enormous. About 1,000 DM spent on each man for recruitment and training went to waste.⁴ Productivity suffered, both because

¹ Ges.Verb., StdKW., Table 'Belegschaftswechsel - Arbeiter untertage. Ruhr'. Workforce growth cannot be directly calculated from the net effect of intake and wastage because the transfers from above ground to below ground (and vice versa) have to be taken into account.

² OBADA I8007/520/55, ABB annual report 1954.

³ Excluding apprentices. Apprentices were counted as part of the hirings above ground because that was where they were initially employed. After two years training, or reaching the age of sixteen, they were transferred underground. This explains the apparent anomaly in table 16 - that the workforce continued to grow despite net losses in adult recruitment and wastage. Workforce growth was accounted for by the transfer of apprentices underground.

⁴ According to one report, the full cost was nearer 1,200 DM, but 1,000 was the figure usually given. See 'Der Pütt darf nicht Durchgangsstation bleiben!', *Industriekurier*, 25.11.1952.

the number of inexperienced men in the mines was higher than it needed to be and because more experienced men were tied up supervising - albeit perfunctorily - the newcomers. Accidents increased, both because of the high proportion of newcomers and because the continual appearance of new gaps in the workforce forced deputies to keep transferring labour from one face - and one set of working conditions - to another.¹ In addition, as will be seen, management was wasting its best chance to create a stable workforce. As time went on, the mines found themselves hiring new recruits who were less and less likely to stay.

Wastage was also a key reason why selective recruitment was slow to have a really transformative effect on workforce age structure. Mining experts continually bemoaned the shortfall in the age range 25-40, generally regarded as the most productive group.² Table 17 shows that this group's share of the underground workforce had been reduced by 50 percent since 1939 and grew only slowly after the war.³

Table 17: Age structure of underground workforce (cohorts as %)⁴

<u>Age Cohort</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1957</u>
16-24	11.3	15.39	19.52	22.36	26.23	29.42	30.96	33.15	32.15	31.65
25-39	56.1	29.54	29.90	30.71	29.92	29.50	29.68	32.04	34.59	37.64
40+	32.6	55.08	50.58	46.93	43.85	41.08	39.36	34.81	33.26	30.71

It may seem strange, in view of this, that the mines had, as noted earlier, deliberately excluded new recruits above the age of 25. The point is that the 25-40 group was traditionally regarded as the most productive not because of its

¹ Max Oberschuir, 'Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Ausbildung des bergmännischen Nachwuchses', *Bergfreiheit*, 1957, 22, pp.437-445, here pp.438-9.

² See Hans Heinrich Bischoff 'Die Altersgliederung der Arbeiter im Steinkohlenbergbau', *Glückauf*, 1952, 88, 41/42, pp.1009-1012.

³ Another factor was the employers' willingness to restrict the pace of redundancies.

⁴ Calculated from *ZdKW*, 7,p.38;16,p.47;26,p.47 & 39,p.50.

physical strength alone, but because of the combination of strength and *experience*. Even if the mines had been able to hire many more newcomers in the 25-40 age range, this would achieve little, since the real problem was that the experienced men were losing strength faster than younger *experienced* men were coming up to replace them. It made sense to recruit younger men and wait for them to mature, or rather it *would* have made sense had not wastage attained such proportions that a significant share of younger recruits left before they ever reached the optimal age range.¹

Problems at the pits and trouble at the mill

What were the causes of these labour losses? It is worthwhile confirming at the outset that wastage was to an overwhelming extent caused by miners voluntarily seeking employment elsewhere. As figure 8 shows, losses due to natural causes - deaths, invalidity or unfitness for mining work, were only a small and indeed diminishing proportion of labour wastage. Though the statistics do not allow us to distinguish between voluntary losses and dismissals until 1955, it is known that sackings made up only a small proportion of wastage.²

From 1952 onwards a great deal of time and effort was spent studying wastage in the mines. In 1952, a subcommittee on workforce and production questions (subcommittee 1) of the Marshall Plan coal production committee³ set up a special working party to look into it. In 1953, the DKBL's Manpower and Training Committee set up its own special committee on the subject.⁴ In 1954,

¹ The relationship between high wastage amongst the under 25 year olds and the slow growth of the most productive group was not lost on the employers, even if they failed to combat some of the principal causes of wastage. See BBA 8,384, Conc to DKBL, 25.2.1949; 8,448, Memo of meeting between CCCG and mines in lower Rhine district. Discussion before arrival of CCCG, 19.9.1949, see comments of GHH director Nebelung.

² Ges.verb., StdKW., table 'Aufteilung des Abganges nach Gründen - Arbeiter unter Tage. Ruhr'.

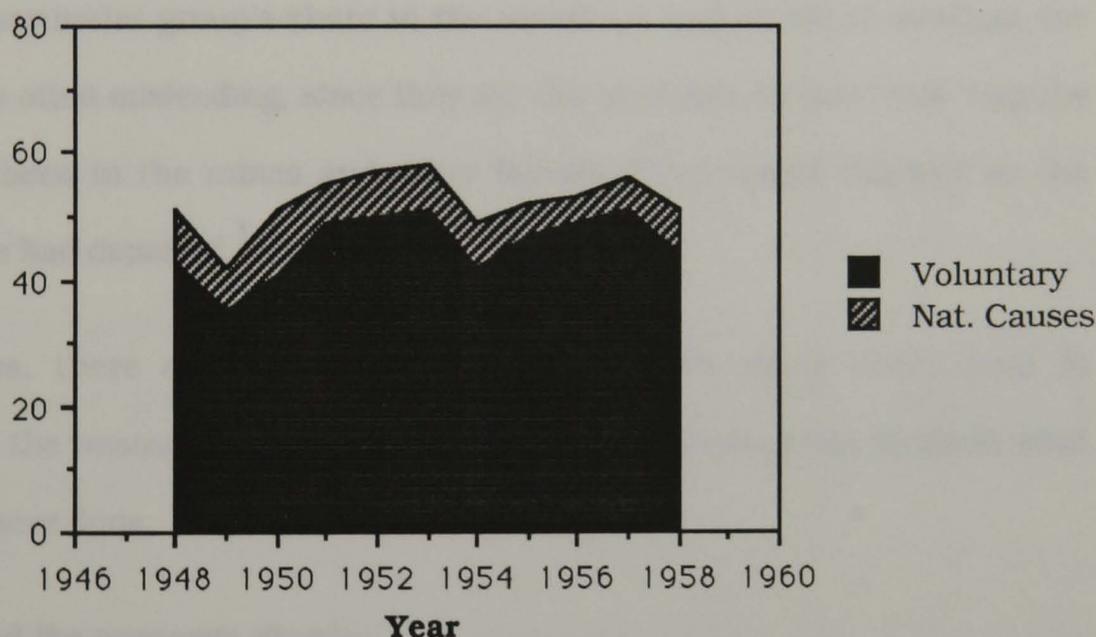
³ See chapter 8, p.371.

⁴ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, Minutes of AAA meeting, 19.10.1953.

the Federal Labour Ministry considered commissioning a special investigation into wastage, but the mines, nervous about letting an outsider look into the industry, forestalled this by carrying out their own investigation.¹ In 1955, however, the Labour Ministry did commission a study, which resulted in a 250 page manuscript produced by the Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt.² In the 1960's, another, even more detailed, study was commissioned by the EGKS and carried out by Infas.³ The information that we have on mining is thus probably unrivalled by any other occupational group.

Fig. 8: Cause of underground wastage⁴

Wastage (in 1000's)



¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B119, 1519, LAA NRW, Minutes of 2. Meeting of Bergbau-Ausschuß on 10.2.1954, 12.4.1954.

² Institut für Sozialforschung, 'Die subjektiven und objektiven Abkehrgründe bei sieben Zechen des westdeutschen Steinkohlenbergbaues in ihrer Auswirkung auf die Sicherung des Belegschaftsstandes unter Tage', (Unpublished Ms. Frankfurt/M 1955); Ludwig v. Friedeburg, 'Zur Fluktuation im Steinkohlenbergbau. Ergebnisse einer industriesoziologischen Untersuchung...', *Bundesarbeitsblatt* 1957, pp.705-721; Rudolf Petz 'Die subjektiven und objektiven Abkehrgründe im Kohlenbergbau. Bemerkungen zu der industriesoziologischen Untersuchung...', in *Ibid.*, pp.721-734; Rudolf Petz, 'Fluktuation im Steinkohlenbergbau! Was kann noch dagegen geschehen?...' (Unpublished Ms. Bonn, no date [1958]).

³ Institut für angewandte Sozialwissenschaft, 'Untersuchung über die Fluktuation der Arbeitskräfte im Steinkohlenbergbau. Ergebnisbericht', (Bad Godesberg 1966).

⁴ *Ibid.*

Despite all this attention to the problem, it proved extremely hard to reach firm conclusions. There seem to have been considerable variations between subregions within the Ruhr. There is clear evidence that patterns of wastage were continually in flux, as social and economic conditions and the structure of the industry's intake changed. In any case, the exact weighting of different factors in producing the decision to leave was often impossible to determine. Probably many leavers were not really sure themselves as to exactly what had precipitated their departure. In addition, many left without giving notice, and thus could not be asked why they were leaving. Then there was the difficulty of identifying which groups were more likely to leave: straight comparisons between a particular group's share in the workforce and its share amongst the leavers were often misleading, since they did not take into account how long the group had been in the mines and other factors which might impinge on the number who had departed.¹

Nevertheless, there are a number of points can be made which help to understand the wastage faced by the mines and to determine the limits to what they could have done.

Wastage and the economic climate

As one would expect, the gradual improvement in job opportunities outside the mines encouraged many new miners to seek employment elsewhere. The iron and steel industry proved a particularly powerful draw on mining's recruits.²

¹ The latter problem proved so complex that in its comparison of the leaving rates of different groups, the Institut für Sozialforschung study chose to ignore the question of their strength in the workforce altogether, a fact which considerably undermined its results. It made little sense to say, as the study did, that refugees accounted for 10% of one mines' wastage and 20% in another pit, without measuring the respective proportions refugees made up of the workforces as a whole and of recent intake.

² OBADA I8010/2924/48, OBAD Lagebericht for 3rd Q. 1948.

Table 18: Wastage amongst all new miners hired by Hibernia¹

Year	New Miners hired	% leaving mines in					5th	Number remaining after five years	% remaining after five years
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	year after being hired			
1945	732	9.84	30.87	6.56	3.69	2.46	341	46.58 ²	
1946	3209	36.58	16.39	5.86	2.71	2.43	1156	36.02	
1947	5227	27.87	19.23	6.18	4.23	2.60	2085	39.89	
1948	3052	24.38	18.48	7.54	4.16	2.16	1321	43.28	
1949	2430	19.38	17.45	8.35	3.50	2.06	1197	49.26	
1950	2521	17.73	22.53	6.82	4.40	7.77	1027	40.74	
1951	2554	22.44	23.10	9.87	7.64	3.60	852	33.36	
1952	2750	29.02	26.47	11.85	3.89	1.89	739	26.87	
1953	2749	31.32	25.14	7.78	2.33	1.46	879	31.98	
1954	302	29.47	30.79	7.95	6.95	2.65	67	22.19	
1955	1292	27.32	31.27						
1956	2105	42.91							
1957	2330								
1958	1121								

As table 18 reveals, the real problem was less that early recruits drifted away than that new miners hired in the 1950's were far less likely to become permanent additions to the workforce than those taken on in the 1947-51 period. Between 1947 and 1950, Hibernia laid on 13,230 adult trainees of whom 5,630 or 43 percent were still there five years after having been hired.³ Between 1951 and 1954 the mines laid on 8,355 men of whom 2,537 or only 30.37 percent were still there at the end of their first five years. Results for the 1954-56 period were clearly shaping up to be far worse. A different set of Hibernia figures confirms this picture and shows that, from the beginning of the 1950's onwards, each year's intake of new labour was less likely than its predecessors to be still there at the end of three years (see figure 9).⁴ Statistics from other mining companies tell a similar story.⁵

¹ Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Hibernia Sozialbericht 1956 & 1958*, annex 8. 'New Miners' means in this case adult men who came to Hibernia with no previous experience. Percentages are author's calculation.

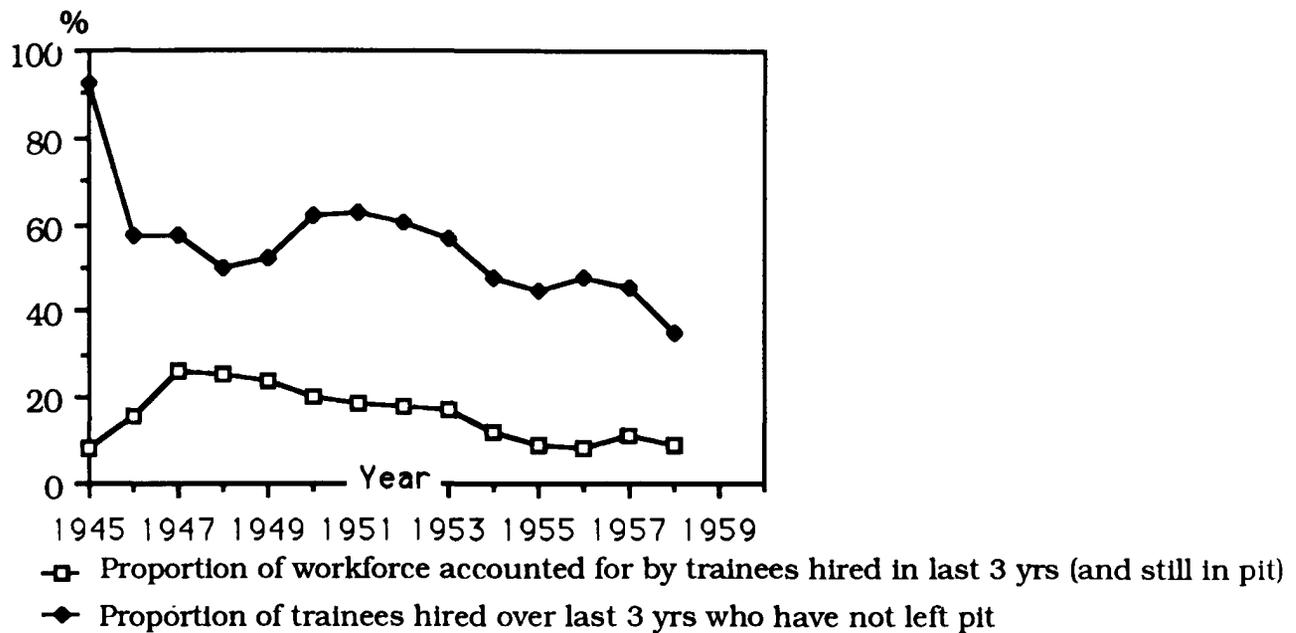
² Figure distorted by the fact that recruitment of new miners began only late in the year.

³ Calculated from above.

⁴ Calculated from Hibernia figures in Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Hibernia Sozialbericht 1958*, annex 4: 'Wechsel und Stand der Neubergleute untertage'.

⁵ At the Gneisenau mines, for instance, 4/5 of the workforce in 1956 had been there for more than five years. In other words little of the considerable recruitment (Continued overleaf.)

Fig. 9 Wastage and stability among Hibernia's new miners¹



This was a clear sign of changing perceptions of the job market. Men hired before 1952 were taken on at a time when there were only limited well-paid alternatives to mining. By the time alternative employment *was* available, they had often got so used to mining or tied to the locality that a change no longer seemed attractive. This did not apply to those hired after 1952. When the initial crises of mining employment came - a first accident, unpleasant treatment by a deputy, the cash shortage of the first weeks and so on - there was every incentive to quit the mine and take on another job.

within that period had led to permanent additions to the workforce. See the figures in AZG, File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung von Arbeitskräften aus anderen Bezirken (Umschüler)', Gruppe Gneisenau table, 'Zusammensetzung der Untertage-Belegschaft nach bergmännischen Erfahrungsgraden', 26.10.1957; File 'I 1 28 Verteilung von Arbeitskräften', Table 'über die Zu- und Abgänge an 'Bergfremden' in der Zeit vom 1.9.1945-31.8.1947'; File 'I 1 13 Gedinge Regelung 1.1.1945-31.12.1953', Memo 4.3.1948.

¹ Source: Hibernia figures in Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Hibernia Sozialbericht 1958*, annex 4: 'Wechsel und Stand der Neubergleute untertage'.

From the unwillingly mobile to seasonal labour

The other reason for new recruits' changing behaviour was rather different and revealed both the opportunity with which the mines were presented in the late 1940's and the difficulties they faced by the mid-1950's. In the 1940's and early 1950's, the mines drew on the 'unwillingly mobile', men who by dint of circumstance were set in motion - be it as a result of expulsions, the effects of the currency reform or whatever. Increasingly, however, the intake 'normalised' to young, single men out to maximise their earnings for a few years before settling down to some reasonably convivial occupation.

This shift is evident if we look at the new miners' age and occupational structure.

Table 19: Age structure of Heisingen intake¹

Year	<u>Proportion of workforce in following age categories (%):</u>				
	<u>-18</u>	<u>19-25</u>	<u>26-30</u>	<u>31-35</u>	<u>35+</u>
1946-7	7	47	22	10	15
	<u>17-20</u>	<u>21-25</u>	<u>26-30</u>	<u>31-35</u>	<u>35+</u>
<i>(official age limit for recruits = 25)</i>					
1948	36	35	15	7	7
1949	45	41	9	3	3
1950	42	44	8	3	3
<i>(official age limit 32)</i>					
1951	40	40	13	5	5
1952	37	37	15	8	3
1953	35	36	17	8	3
1954	41	33	16	7	4
1955	37	34	18	8	3
1956	38	35	17	6	4
1957	39	34	18	7	3

In the pre-48 period, when men up to 40 years of age were being taken, a considerable proportion of new miners were not of the age at which men normally moved into mining. Almost 50 percent were over 25. Amongst the expellees in the 1945-48 period, the proportion of over 25's may have been higher

¹ Source: Ges. Verb., Heisingen papers, Reception camp log book.

than 60 percent, with almost 40 percent being over 30.¹ In 1948-49, the average age fell dramatically as the result of management's determination to rejuvenate the workforce. It was therefore not a sign of the older age groups' unwillingness to take on mining work. What it did mean was that many of the 'unwillingly mobile' who would have been prepared to make a go of mining were prevented from doing so. By the 1950's, the mines could not attract older married men even when they were willing to do so.

The shift can also be observed in occupational structure. In the period up to 1948-49, the mines absorbed occupational and social groups from which they would never normally have drawn labour. According to SoFoSt records, around 20 percent of expellees taken on in the 1945-48 period had formerly been in white collar, managerial or professional occupations or self-employed.² This was an indication of the degree to which necessity rather than personal volition played a role in migration. Over the following three years, this shrank to less than 10 percent.³ In 1949, the first year for which we have detailed records from Essen-Heisingen, unskilled labour still made up a relatively low proportion of labour intake - less than 50 percent. This changed the following year, first as the result of a rapid influx of agricultural labour and later as unskilled industrial labour came to dominate the recruitment picture (see table 20).

The point is not that skilled or white collar workers were necessarily more likely to remain miners than unskilled. Indeed none of these factors - age, marital status or occupation were necessarily signs that recruits would stay. What they are, however, is *indices* of the degree to which dire necessity overcame

¹ Croon and Utermann, *Zeche und Gemeinde*, p.296. % is author's calculation.

² Calculated from Croon and Utermann, *Zeche und Gemeinde*, p.296.

³ *Ibid.*.

the normal promptings of personal volition. If older men with a background in white collar work flock to the mines, then this is a sign that one is dealing with mobility that was the product of necessity and not a personal wish. Of course, account has to be taken of those changes in the composition of the recruits that were caused by management decision rather than by the changing circumstances of the population. But once allowance has been made for policy changes, it can be seen that at the beginning, men came for whom the personal and psychological barriers to mobility in general and to taking up mining work in particular were very large. They were the 'unwillingly mobile'. By the end of the period this was no longer the case.

Table 20: Former profession of new miners in %¹

Year	<u>unskilled</u>			<u>skilled</u>		<u>total</u>	<u>white collar</u>
	<u>Agric.</u>	<u>Industrial</u>	<u>total</u>	<u>engineerg. & buildg.</u>	<u>other</u>		
1949	18	31	49	28	15	43	4
1950	27	40	67	13	15	28	4
1951	24	39	63	14	17	31	4
1952	22	33	55	18	19	37	4
1953	23	35	58	19	18	37	4
1954	20	39	59	21	14	35	3
1955	18	44	62	20	13	33	2
1956	17	44	61	21	12	33	3
1957	12	48	60	22	12	34	2

This latter point is reinforced when we note a further feature of the mines' recruitment in the mid-1950's, namely that new men with no previous experience provided an ever smaller proportion of the industry's labour intake. For one thing, the mines' were forced into poaching labour from one another and movement from pit to pit increased substantially, averaging 35 percent of total wastage in the 1954-58 period.² The other main reason was that the mines

¹ Calculated from from Ges. Verb., Heisingen papers, Log book. Former miners and mining apprentices have been excluded.

² See, for instance the changing Gneisenau figures in AZG File 'I 1 28 Verteilung von Arbeitskräften', Table 'über die Zu- und Abgänge an 'Bergfremden' in der Zeit vom 1.9.1945-31.8.1947'; File 'II 3, Einstellung und Entlassung von Arbeitern, 1.10.1953-31.12.1963', Gruppe Gneisenau to director Stodt, 18.8.1955 + appendices. See also Ges.Verb., StdKW., table 'Belegschaftswechsel - Arbeiter untertage.Ruhr'.

were increasingly hiring men who were oscillating between mining and other employment.¹ Most collieries were now even prepared to accept miners who had previously left the industry in breach of contract.² Thus by the mid-1950's, the mines were caught up in a hiring- and wastage cycle, poaching labour off one another and hiring men who were clearly not going to stay long in the mines.

'Pit militarism' and the 'unreserved army'

One thing that applies right through the period is that though the wages on offer in the steel mills and on the building sites put the mines under a great deal of pressure, the wastage problem was not purely one of money. The repeated calls for mining to stand at the top of the wages ladder suggested that all mining had to do was offer a few Marks a week more than the competition to solve its labour problems. This was both more and less than the truth. It was less than the truth because even when the mines' wages were higher than iron and steel - as in 1956-7 after the introduction of the Miners' Bonus Scheme³ - the collieries continued to lose more men than they hired. In 1957, though earnings in mining were well above those of iron and steel,⁴ wastage was more than 10 percent higher than recruitment.⁵ And it was more than the truth, because - as the 1955 investigation discovered - most of those who left the mines moved to a job *where they earned less than they had in mining.*⁶ Not only that, but they rated their new pay *better* than they had the higher earnings in the pits. The point was that there was a trade-off between the negative characteristics of the work on the one hand and the wage and other inducements on the other.

¹ See ABB report for 1955, op.cit.

² OBADA I8006/1664/52, ABB report 1.4.-30.6.1952; I8007/1370/55, ABB report 1.1-31.3.1955.

³ See chapter 5, p.257ff.

⁴ UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1955-1957*, p.60 facing.

⁵ See table 16, p.328.

⁶ Institut für Sozialforschung, 'Die subjektiven und objektiven Abkehrgründe', p.208.

Lack of light, the unhealthy atmosphere, the deafening noise of a long face full of pneumatic picks, the exertion of working at the coal in a confined space, the danger of falling stone - these were all features of mining that (given the existing technology) the employers could do little about. Yet, the striking fact is, as the 1955 study was able to ascertain by interviewing former mining employees, that poor treatment by lower management figured almost as frequently as working conditions in explanations for quitting the industry.¹ All other complaints, even those about inadequate pay, were of secondary significance. In other words, a substantial proportion of mining's wastage was at least partially, sometimes even wholly motivated by the experience of mining's management. This is a striking result and there is widespread evidence outside the survey that would support it. The one caveat that one must make is that, by the mid-1950's, mining's management problems were a common newspaper subject.² Phrases such as 'Mensch nicht Markennummer' were common currency³ and gave those who left the mines a ready made explanation for their behaviour which they could, without thinking particularly, serve up to sociologists keen for a decent answer. Thus, not every complaint can be taken at face value.

Nevertheless, the negative perception of management and human relations is overwhelming if not universal. In 1952, when the Sozialforschungsstelle carried out a survey of new miners at the Victor-Ickern mine, it included the question 'Wie kommen Sie mit den Vorgesetzten aus'. The first respondent complained that the deputy had refused to allow him holiday leave and he had had to go to the manager to get it; the second could not stand his present

¹ Ibid., p.228.

² Jantke, in *Zeche und Gemeinde*, for example, makes it clear that there was a widespread (though often inaccurate) awareness of what working relations in mining were like. - cited in Manfred Fronz & Gerd Peter (ed), *Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung im Steinkohlenbergbau. Vol. 2: Der Steiger. Auszüge aus empirischen Untersuchungen 1950-1982*, Bochum 1983, pp.15-53, here p.44.

³ See, for instance 'Hier hat der Bergbau versagt', *Rheinische Zeitung*, 31.10.1950.

supervisor, a fact which influenced his whole perception of working in the mines and the third, a highly intelligent and articulate character who made a good impression on the interviewer, produced a scathing critique of the mining deputies. Though some were reasonably positive, many more of the thirty odd interviews on record were in the same mould.¹ Of course, the Ruhr was not uniform and there were considerable variations between pits, indeed differences within a mine from one coal district to another. For example, a study based on another SoFoSt survey demonstrated that relations between men and management at the Emscher-Lippe mine were generally good, a result out of line with most Ruhr mines. Within the Emscher-Lippe mine, however, there was one district where the men were as critical of their deputies as they were likely to be anywhere.²

As far as new labour was concerned there were four main things wrong with management. First, few miners felt that they had been properly inducted into the work or looked after during their initial employment period. Wastage was particularly high during that initial period. In 1948-9, when the labour market situation was highly unfavourable for job seekers even in NRW, losses in the first few weeks and months of employment were striking. The Concordia mine hired 807 men in 1948 of whom 260 were gone by the end of the year. Of those 260, 42 had moved to other mines, but the rest had left the industry. 12 percent of this wastage had taken place by the end of the first month of employment; 40 percent by the end of the second and 60 percent by the end of three months.³ The Hibernia company's record was somewhat better but even in the comparatively low wastage year of 1949, 20 percent of new recruits had quit

¹ SoFoStA File 'Neubergleute- Befragung. Untersuchung Vincke Lager' (Lager belonging to mining company Victor-Ickern).

² Jantke *Bergmann und Zeche*, Part 2: *Vorgesetzte unter Tage*, passim.

³ BBA 8, 384, Concordia, Circular from Direction 1, 15.2.1949, annex 1.

within a year of being taken on.¹ By the early 1950's, when employment opportunities elsewhere were better, the mines were losing 20 percent of their trainees in the first four weeks and up to 70 percent in the first five months.² Lack of understanding, lack of instruction, poor communication and the accidents that resulted from these other factors all combined to drive the new miners out in droves.

The problems were not restricted to the period of induction itself. A frequent cause of bitterness was that deputies tried to deceive the workforce in the contract wage calculations. Even after the calculation had been agreed, the deputies and overmen often made changes to the calculations³ - a problem so widespread that the Gedingekommission frequently called on employers to root it out.⁴ In addition, the arbitrariness and vindictiveness of officials who had taken some personal offense to a miner, was another recurrent complaint. The one-time new miner, later cultural director for the IGBE, Walter Köpping, a man well in excess of six foot, recalled being deliberately consigned to work in a low seam by a hostile deputy.⁵ Hans Dieter Baroth turned his back on the mines for good when, after failing to stand up when the overman approached, he found himself permanently consigned to one of the most unpleasant loading jobs at the pit bottom.⁶ Finally, the deputies' general tone and approach were frequently condemned. At a church convocation for the Siebenbürger Sachsen in 1955, for example, one of the men declared that he had left mining because of

¹ Calculated from Annex 8 in Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1958*.

² AZG I 1 26 File 'Zuweisung von Arbeitskräften aus anderen Bezirken (Umschüler)' Minutes of 2 meeting of Arbeitsgemeinschaft Arbeitsamt-Bergbau, 8.5.1953, here p.3 - report on SoFoSt investigation into wastage.

³ Untersuchung Vincke Lager, op.cit., interview 3.

⁴ See, for instance, AZG File 'I 1 13, Gedinge-Regelung, 1.1.45-31.12.1953', DKBL, Circular to district representatives, 25.11.1948; BBA 32, 870, DKBL, Circular No. V 103 to mining companies and collieries, 6.12.1949.

⁵ Walter Köpping, *Bildungsobmann auf "Julia"*, p.404.

⁶ Baroth, *Aber es waren schöne Zeiten*, p.187ff.

the 'rauhe Ton' there, while another had been on the point of resigning over the 'unflätige Schimpfworte' which the deputy had directed at him.¹

Employers' responses to wastage

In some respects, the employers had always taken workforce stability very seriously. The logic behind the apprentice strategy was ultimately that it would generate a stable and therefore productive workforce. The attention devoted by the industry to housing and hostels revealed a similar dedication to encouraging the newcomers to strike roots in the Ruhr.²

However, the approach to the induction of adult labour, and to human relations generally, betrays very little sign of this. Management seems to have operated with the assumption that apart from housing there were two main sources of wastage. In the first place there was the environment underground which they were well aware was a deterrent to many. That was something the industry could do nothing about. Secondly, there was the inadequacy, the lack of steadfastness and character of the labour force.³ Therefore integration policy concentrated on two main areas, namely on creating a positive compensatory environment outside the mines and on forging a new steadfast labour force with the apprentices. Neither of these policies were unintelligent. Housing could play a powerful role in tying men to the pits. But the fact was that one of the key problem areas, man management in the production process was, for a long time, simply not seen as part of the problem.

There are many indications that managers saw wastage primarily as evidence of the inadequacy of the recruits. After noting that the bulk of new recruits after

¹ Ges. Verb. File 'SBZ Arb 130.0-130.25', Confidential memo for Dr. Ullrich, 31.8.1955.

² See chapter 8, *passim*.

³ See chapter 9 for a deeper examination of the assumptions behind this view.

1945 left within a short period, a DKBL survey intended for public consumption could not refrain from adding the parenthetical comment, 'die Schwere der Arbeit hatte für alle halben Charaktere ihre wohltuende Schockwirkung getan.'¹ And at a meeting of mine directors in September 1949, almost all present complained about 'wenig oder gar keine Disziplin bei den Neubergleuten, die in großen Scharen wieder abwandern'.²

The mines knew no better answer to this wastage than to try and cleanse the workforce of the sort of 'work-shy elements' who were likely to leave. According to the labour administration, there were more men sacked without notice in mining than in any other major industry.³ At a Dortmund conference at which labour exchange, union and employer representatives and other interested parties met to discuss ways of reducing wastage, a number of different participants suggested better man-management and a better induction programme were needed. The employers, however, argued that the costs would be prohibitive and suggested that the ideal solution would be sack 3,000 - 4,000 miners (in the Dortmund area) and let the apprentices gradually fill the gap!⁴

Despite criticism from many outside groups, the employers were not prepared to give the newcomers the benefit of the doubt and test whether a better induction programme or more favourable conditions might produce better results. A good example of this was the demand for bridging loans that would help the newcomers from out of town deal with the first few weeks of employment. Often arriving with no funds, the newcomers had to wait ten days for their first

¹ DKBL (ed.), *Ruhr Almanach. Vom Bergmann und Bergbau*, Cologne 1950, p.95.

² BBA 8/448, Memo about discussions between CCCG and mine directors of DKBL district Niederrhein, 19.9.1949. Discussions before arrival of CCCG reps; see also BBA 8, 352, Memo from Arbeiterpersonalbüro, 12.7.1952.

³ OBADA I8006/1792/51, WIM NRW to OBAD, 30.7.1951, annex: copy of minutes of 4th LAA NRW executive board meeting on 25.6.1951.

⁴ AZG File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung von Arbeitskräften aus anderen Bezirken (Umschüler), Minutes of 2 meeting of Arbeitsgemeinschaft Arbeitsamt-Bergbau, 8.5.1953.

payment and then found themselves confronted with hostel charges, deductions for work clothing and other expenses which reduced the first pay packets to a level on which it was hardly possible to live, a problem that was particularly acute for married men who were trying to support their families at the same time.¹ In the early years after the currency reform, getting by with the earnings paid for general labouring was hard enough anyway. The mines refused to offer subsidies, despite continual requests from the labour administration that they do so. Indeed, they were so little prepared to acknowledge the newcomers' genuine difficulties that an attempt by the Economics Ministry to get the labour administration to give some sort of bridging loan failed due to lack of mining support.²

Not unrelated to the belief that wastage was a sign of lack of discipline and the mark of the work-shy was another assumption which also initially deterred the employers from taking new miners' problems seriously, namely, the view that as labour conditions 'normalised', wastage would continue to decline. In 1949, underground labour losses dropped by almost 20 percent from the previous year. Equivalent to about 17 percent of the underground workforce, it was the lowest proportional loss of manpower since the end of the war.³ Though the more perceptive members of the industry knew that the underlying long-term trend on the labour market was against mining, many colliery managers believed that the reduced wastage in 1949 was part of a 'normalisation', a return to familiar conditions, and foreshadowed even greater falls in the years to come. In December 1949, for example, the DKBL's expert in labour and production

¹ OBADA 18006/1792/51, WiM NRW to OBAD, 30.7.1951, annex: copy of minutes of 4th LAA NRW executive board meeting on 25.6.1951; 'Neubergleute verlassen das Revier', *Deutsche Woche, Munich* 21.1.1951.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 21395, BWiM III A 1, Memo, 11.12.1952.

³ Calculated from figures in table 16, p.315.

statistics, Dr. Bischoff, predicted that wastage would continue to fall and 'sich so die Arbeitsverhältnisse auch qualitativ gesehen, immer mehr normalisieren'.¹

Initially, the wastage did not force the mines to undertake any particular measures to prevent it. True, the costs of hiring and training and also the costs in terms of productivity were considerable, but the labour supply was sufficient to replace it.² This changed for the first time in 1952 when some mines reported serious difficulties in obtaining labour in the summer months. Seasonal losses to agriculture and the building trades were traditionally high in the late spring and early summer period and these were now being compounded by the steel mills' labour demands and a general increase in NRW employment opportunities. By summer 1953, most mines were finding it hard to replace labour.³ For the first time they began to encounter serious competition outside NRW. In part this was because the NRW iron and steel industry itself was recruiting in the mines' hunting grounds, but it also reflected the increase in economic activity in hitherto depressed regions.⁴ The result was not only that the reservoir of suitable labour began to dry up but also that by 1955, at the latest, mining had lost a lot of its earlier backing from the regional labour administrations in these areas - at least as far as adult labour was concerned.⁵

The mines were now forced to begin thinking more seriously about labour problems within the mines. After years of labour administration pressure, the employers finally acknowledged the problem that many newcomers and particularly married men found the initial period of employment financially

¹ H.H. Bischoff, 'Arbeiterzahl und Arbeiterwechsel'.

² In 1953, for example, the total cost of recruitment and induction was around 1.5 million DM. Ges. Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß' Arb. aus. f. A meeting, 17.5.1954.

³ ABB, Annual report for 1954.

⁴ OBADA 18007/ 2142/55, ABB quarterly report, 1.4.-30.6.1955.

⁵ A fact which can be gleaned by reading ABB reports between the lines. See OBADA 18007/ 2932/55, ABB report 1.7-30.9.1955.

very difficult. By 1953, most mines had agreed to suspend charges for the first months' board and lodgings and, after a year's employment at the same mine, to waive them altogether.¹ Despite rising costs, hostel charges barely increased. Some mines even introduced additional subsidies for younger miners.

In addition, two areas of working life in particular received attention. One was the newcomer's first few weeks. It had long been well known that wastage at this point was particularly high.² A number of mines responded to this by appointing advisors to help the newcomers adjust and to deal with any problems arising. The HBAG set up a special unit to coordinate all questions relating to newcomers, the EOA (Einsatz orstfremder Arbeitskräfte). It ensured that there was a personal continuity, whereby the same individual involved in recruiting a new miner also accompanied the newcomer on his first day at the mine and maintained contact during the first few weeks at work.³ The other aspect of working experience to receive some amelioration was the progression of the qualified apprentice, now Knappe, into normal productive labour.⁴

And yet, at least until 1955, the main problem of working life - the character of management and human relations - seemed to be so intractable that little was undertaken to change it. There were a number of reasons for this, some which we will return to in the conclusion. But it also reflected the fact that those figures in the industry who were most aware of the need for a new style of human relations - labour directors, training personnel, manpower experts and so on - were not or not yet in a position to assert themselves against the colliery

¹ ABB Annual Report 1954.

² Budde, 'Gründe und Auswirkungen', appendix, table. 13.

³ Terhorst, 'Zehnjährige Zusammenarbeit', op.cit.; Ges.Verb. File '300-301.1 Ausbildung von Neubergleuten', copy. 'Merkblatt für die Werbung von Neubergleuten', Hamborn 20.12.1954.

⁴ See chapter 6, p.293, fn.1.

managers.¹ It was no accident that the two areas given special attention were both problems of transition into the production process. It was easier in such cases for training personnel and manpower specialists to wrest some control from the works' manager than it was on the issue of the factory 'climate' in general.

The struggle for labour

Since they were unable to reduce wastage, the mines were continually under pressure to obtain new labour. From the early 1950's this became more and more difficult. Apart from the gradual growth of alternative employment opportunities, one other brake on labour supply was the sealing of the GDR's borders in 1952. Prior to that date a fair number of GDR migrants had crossed the borders illegally and made their own way to the pits. From 1952 onwards this became impossible. Refugees and migrants wishing to enter the Federal Republic had to be transported there by train or plane from Berlin. All now went through the procedure laid down by the Notaufnahmegesetz from 1950, by which they were assessed for refugee status and its attendant privileges (priority social housing and so forth). Migrants who failed to obtain refugee status spent long periods in the so-called 'Stammlager' in Berlin, until through obtaining employment or by some other means, they gained the right to remain in the Federal Republic (though not to the special aid for refugees).²

These new conditions reduced the number of GDR citizens coming to the Ruhr mines. Those who had attained refugee status often felt secure enough to wait for a better offer, while those without it had difficulty getting into the FRG. In

¹ Of course a lot of this is invisible to the outsider. Dr. Steffen, the former deputy to the HBAG's labour director and one of the industry's leading training experts, described in an interview the battle between Terhorst, the labour director, and the Betriebsführer. Interviews 1.12.1982/ 24.5.1983.

² Bgbl 1950, 36, p.367ff. Gesetz über die Notaufnahmen von Deutschen in das Bundesgebiet, 22.8.1950; ABB annual report 1955.

1950, refugees amounted to 17,694, or almost 70 percent of all new miners coming through the Heisingen reception camp but by 1953, despite the growing numbers entering the FRG via Berlin, this had fallen to 12,840 or 31 percent.¹

The mines devoted a lot of energy to improving and intensifying their campaigning strategy. Until 1952-53, all recruitment of adult men from outside the Ruhr was done by the labour administration rather than the mines themselves. The labour exchanges did not conduct actual campaigns, but instead restricted themselves to advising those who sought employment of the opportunities available in mining. In 1953, as unemployment in the refugee Länder began to decline, the mines called for a more active policy. Together with the ABB and the local labour exchanges in the regions, the mines carried out campaigns across the length and breadth of Germany. In 1954, the bulk of labour obtained from outside the Ruhr came by this means.² The approach became increasingly professional, and campaigns were carefully coordinated with all the relevant administrations in advance.

Alongside the organisational changes, the difficulties of attracting labour forced a major rethink in the approach to potential recruits. Works councillors and sometimes former new miners now accompanied the campaigns to provide convincing accounts of mining life.³ A major change came in 1955, when the UVR decided to replace 'Du' with 'Sie' in its campaign propaganda. This was probably the first time that existing or potential miners had ever been addressed as 'Sie' by Ruhr mining employers. An ABB circular in October 1955, offered a sample of the sort of invitation issued prior to a local recruiting event. Beginning with a 'Sehr geehrter Herr!', the invitation contained amongst other

¹ Ges. Verb., Heisingen papers, Heisingen annual reports and file 'Statistik', compilation of refugee statistics.

² OBADA I8007/520/55, ABB annual report 1954.

³ ABB, annual report 1954.

things the suggestion, 'Bringen Sie doch Ihre Ehefrau oder Ihre Braut mit', a tone and indeed an idea that would have been inconceivable in 1950.¹ By 1955, however, it had become standard to suggest to recruits that they bring their wives or fiancées along to the information evenings.² In many cases, the potential miner and his partner had a face to face chat with mines' representatives and local labour administration officials.³ In effect, senior employers' representatives were introducing here the sort of personal relations approach they failed to institute within the works themselves.

New sources of labour

As the competition within the Ruhr intensified, the mines came to rely ever more heavily on the provinces, where expectations and wage standards were lower and the industrial competition more limited. But as competition intensified here too, the mines began to look for a new hinterland where expectations and opportunities were lower than in the FRG. At least initially, the mines seemed also to have hoped that they might encounter that older, simpler and more loyal mentality whose passing they so bemoaned in the Federal Republic. Certainly such expectations were apparent in the campaign to recruit 'Siebenbürger Sachsen' from Austria⁴ and the employers devoted considerable ingenuity and energy to obtaining and integrating these men.⁵ A whole series of campaigns followed, designed to draw labour from the pockets of

¹ StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund 46, ABB, Circular No. 6/55 to labour exchanges, 26.10.1955.

² Ges.Verband, File 'Arbeitsausschuß', 'Merkblatt für die Werbung von Neubergleuten', Hamborn, 20.12.1954.

³ ABB annual report 1954.

⁴ Ges.Verb. File 'SBZ Arb 130.0-130.25', Copy of memo from Dr. Niehues, 12.5.1952, annex; Notes of a meeting in the Foreign Office, 22.8.1952; Hibernia to DKBL, 17.10.1952; Ullrich, Memo, 17.9.1952.

⁵ See BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 21395, Memo, 28.10.1952.; BWIM IIIA4 to BAM, 31.10.1952.; BAM to BWIM, 28.4.1954; Pres. BAVAV to BAM, 3.12.1952; Ges.Verb. File 'SBZ Arb 130.0-130.25', Memo 9.2.1953; 'Batschka Dorf im Kohlenpott', *Rheinische Post*, Düsseldorf, 8.8.1955.

ethnic Germans dotted around Europe. Other groups from Austria, German speaking communities in the Italian Tirol, former German POW's who had remained in France and many more were recruited by the mines.¹

All this ingenuity was not enough to secure the mines a plentiful supply of labour. When the crisis came in 1955, and even the most intensive campaigning proved unable to mobilise the labour required, the mines had to think again.² By now, the mines faced two possible strategies. Either the wages and incentives offered the miner could be improved so substantially as to create a stable workforce. That would depend on governmental help. Or a more modest package could be offered and the mines progressively shift to using foreign labour.

Many collieries recognised that the available sources within the Federal Republic were drying up,³ but the problem was that no one really wanted to bring in foreign workers. The unions were hostile, fearing a source of cheap labour that would be hard to unionise, create a permanent division within the labour force, keep wages down and endanger mine safety.⁴ All groups felt that admitting foreigners would undermine the attempts to improve the industry's status. The employers believed Italians and other mediterranean groups to be unproductive workers, inclined to sully their hostels and politically as well as productively unreliable.⁵ The OBAD feared the implications for mines' safety, while the Federal ministries were anxious about the political implications of admitting large numbers of foreigners. There was still considerable

¹ Terhorst, 'Zehnjährige Zusammenarbeit', chapter 'Werbung von Erwachsenen'. passim; OBADA 140.12/334/56, quarterly report of ABB, 1.10-31.12.1955.

² See chapter 5, p.255ff.

³ Terhorst, 'Zehnjährige Zusammenarbeit', chapter 'Werbung von Erwachsenen'. passim.

⁴ OBADA 18006/2262/55, IGB to OBAD, 17.8.1955.

⁵ On the political fears see Ges.Verb., File 'Arbeitsausschuß', Meeting of UVR Training Subcommittee, 31.8.1955.

unemployment and in addition there were many ethnically German groups in Austria and elsewhere, trying vainly to gain admittance into the Federal Republic.¹

Nevertheless, during the summer of 1955, the mines began seriously to consider recruiting foreigners and the press was full of speculation on the subject.² In effect, the mines used the threat of foreign labour as a means of levering more support out of the state. At a meeting in September, attended by the representatives from the Federal and Economics Ministries, the BAVAV and the NRW LAA, mining representatives warned that foreigners would soon be flooding into the Ruhr. The Labour Ministry was against the idea and, in order to avert it, various alternatives were offered the mines.³ The BAVAV said, for instance, that it would consider denying unemployment benefit to ex-miners employed in the building trade and laid off in winter, thus forcing them to work in the mines. Of greater significance was the Federal Labour Ministry's promise to give the mines assistance in recruiting migrants and refugees from the GDR.⁴ The mines were given privileged access to refugee camps in Berlin and Sandbostel and refugee intake improved as a result.⁵

More significant was the Miners' Bonus Scheme, but even this could not prevent wastage from outpacing recruitment. It is therefore not surprising that 1957

¹ OBADA 18006/3534/54, UVR to Obad, 21.12.1954 and annex President of BAVAV to UVR, 25.11.1954 & BAM to UVR, 9.12.1954.

² OBADA 18006/2262/55, IGB to OBAD, 17.8.1955; OBAD to IGB, 24.8.1955; Ges. Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß', Meeting of UVR Training Subcommittee (Arb.aus.f.A), 31.8.1955.

³ Ges. Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß', Meeting of UVR Training Subcommittee (Arb.aus.f.A), 31.8.1955; Ges. Verb. File 'SBZ Flüchtlinge Arb 130.30-132.15', Meeting with BAM, 13.9.1955.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ges. Verb File 'SBZ Fl.Arb. 130.30-132.15', 'Ergebnisprotokoll über die Besprechung vom 21.11.1955; File 'SBZ Fl.Arb. 133.00-134.0', UVR to BVM, 23.8.1956; Keyser to Ullrich 28.9.1956; AZG File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung von Arbeitskräften aus anderen Bezirken (Umschüler)', Report on Recruitment campaign HBAG Dortmund in Youth Camp Sandbostel, 7-12.10.1957.

was the year in which foreign recruitment made its first major breakthrough in the mines. The first applications for permission to hire non-German speakers had in fact been presented to the OBAD in November 1955.¹ At that time the IGB had been very hostile and workforce pressure had induced one of the companies to withdraw its request.² In the course of 1956, however, agreement was reached between UVR, IGB and OBAD on the terms under which foreign language speakers could be employed in the mines³ and in 1957, after negotiations with the Italian authorities, 1,679 Italians and also 272 Hungarian refugees were brought to the Ruhr mines.⁴ 8.6 percent of the Heisingen intake consisted of foreigners.⁵

The end of an era

Table 21: Labour intake 1955-68⁶

<u>Year</u>	<u>Workforce size on 1 Jan</u>	<u>Underground intake</u> ⁷
1955	300,308	43,834
1956	300,166	53,233
1957	308,162	51,602
1958	312,185	28,316
1959	296,080	7,867
1960	260,523	14,661
1961	238,288	14,700
1962	224,231	10,742
1963	207,336	11,777
1964	195,840	10,055
1965	188,719	7,098
1966	174,374	4,906
1967	148,061	2,017
1968	124,391	4,693

¹ OBADA I8006/3006/55, BA Dinslaken to OBAD, 5.11.1955.

² OBADA I8006/3006/55, Memo 19.3.1956 and 4.5.1956; 'Hamborner Bergbau will keine Ausländer anlegen', *Neue Ruhr Zeitung* Duisburg edition, 3.8.1955. It was Concordia which withdrew its request.

³ OBADA 140.11/2304/56, IGB to OBAD, 18.6.1956.

⁴ Ges.Verb., Heisingen Papers, Heisingen annual report 1957.

⁵ Ges.Verb., Heisingen Papers, Miscellaneous statistics, table 'Herkunftsgebiete 1946/7-1965'.

⁶ Source: Ges.Verb., StdKW, table 'Belegschaftswechsel - Arbeiter Untertage. Ruhr'.

⁷ Excluding movement from pit to pit.

It is hard to say what the industry would have done had the coal crisis not begun in Spring 1958. Probably the employers would have begun to import foreign labour on a large scale, for most of their fears in respect of hot-blooded, work-shy southerners had already proved to be groundless. The Italians were no more inclined to wastage than their German counterparts.¹ And indeed the mines did bring in a considerable number of foreigners over the following years. By 1960, for example, 60 percent of workers taken on from outside the Ruhr were foreigners.² But the most notable aspect of the 1960 intake was not its composition but its size - just 5,648 miners or less than 20 percent of the 1957 figures.³ This was clear proof of the dramatic change in coal's fortunes that had taken place over the last three years.

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33092, AAA Meeting, 20.9.1956. The point is confirmed in, Institut für angewandte Sozialwissenschaft, 'Untersuchung über die Fluktuation', p.90.

² Ges.Verb., Heisingen Papers, miscellaneous statistics, table 'Herkunftsgebiete 1946/7-1965'.

³ Ges.Verb., Heisingen Papers, Annual report for 1960.

Chapter 8: Settling the miner. Housing and hostels for new labour, 1948-58

1: A hearth, a home, a plot of land. Miners' housing and integration

A qualitative solution to the housing problem

If a judgement had to be made purely on the approach taken to new recruits at work, one could easily conclude that the employers did not take the task of settling the adult newcomers very seriously at all. Short-term cost considerations, rigid discipline and the 'I shout therefore I am' mentality seemed always to take precedence over any concerted effort to create links between the trainees and their new profession.

Outside the workplace, however, it is clear that considerable thought and energy were devoted to this task. The employers evidently felt they had more scope away from the work process itself to forge the right conditions for integration and regeneration. The mines themselves would be dirty and unhealthy places whatever the employers did; but a positive living environment might compensate for the negative aspects of the work. 'Ausgleich', compensation, is a word that crops up in almost every piece ever written about miners' housing. And it is a mark of the importance ascribed to creating the right living environment that there were a great many such pieces written.¹

Naturally enough, the decisions about what sort of housing to offer were influenced by the desire to build as fast and as cheaply as possible. Social

¹ In 1947, a senior civil servant in the Reconstruction Ministry could already refer to the 'countless publications' on miners' housing produced since the war. Ministerialrat Dr.Fütterer, 'Bergmannswohnstätten im Ruhrgebiet', *Arbeitsblatt für die britische Zone*, 1947, 1, pp.450-1.

housing in the post-war period was generally less generous in its proportions than earlier building, and certainly far smaller than the 'Altbauten' from before the First World War. But in fact there was from the very beginning a consensus on the part of almost every one involved in building miners' housing, from the Reconstruction Minister down to the housing associations, that a quality solution was called for.

To a degree, this can be seen as a feature of Ruhr housing policy generally. The region was fortunate in having few tenement buildings or big city slum areas and the city planners and above all the SVR were keen to preserve this open semi-urbanised quality. When, in the course of the ECA building programm, an international commission of architects visited the Ruhr, the head of the Reconstruction Ministry defined the goal of rebuilding as 'die kleine Stadt', the small town.¹ For instance, the SVR was very effective at limiting the amount of high-rise building, discouraging even four-storey building where possible.²

Beyond this general commitment, the clear recognition that the function of miners' housing was to create a stable workforce meant that only reasonable standard housing could be offered. This consensus was so strongly established that even in February 1946, when the Ruhr cities were little more than piles of rubble, the director of public works for the North Rhine Province argued that good quality, though modest, housing was essential if newcomers from other professions and other regions were to become productive and permanent members of the workforce.³ Even so, until 1948 the struggle to find recruits

¹ HStAD NW73,55, WAM, Copy of untitled speech dated 4.12.1952, signed Dr.Fütterer.

² Eg. BBA 10,137, Memo of discussion on 6.12.1951 with Oberbaurat Zahn and Memo of discussion on 6.4.1952 in Herne; BBA 30,145, GHH paper 'Entwicklung des Wohnungsbaues des GHH Steinkohlenbergbaues Mitte 1945-Mitte 1950', Oberhausen 9.9.1950.

³ HStAD NW53, 391, Dr.Lehr, Bau 90, Oberpräs. d. Nordrhein-Provinz to Col Dalby, 25.2.1946, annex 'Bau 90 to HQ Mil.Reg. Düsseldorf, 21.2.1946.

any living space at all forced the integrative aspect into the background. But after 1948, in finance discussions in Bonn just as much as in planning debates in the Ruhr, the emphasis was placed firmly on providing qualitative rather than quantitative solutions and on promoting workforce stability rather than simply finding space for new recruits.¹ As the IVB's housing expert, Mattern, told the Special Committee appointed in 1948 to look into the financial state of the mining industry,² 'es kommt darauf an..die Neubergleute durch Beschaffung von Wohnraum bodenständig zu machen'.³

Designing the miner's house

What was the optimal living environment for the miner and particularly the new miner? A useful starting point to the views of the policy-makers is a short paper, written by Professor Franz Knipping, which exemplifies in concise form many of the demands, images and hopes that gave impetus and shape to the miners' housing programme.⁴ Knipping was director of the Treuhandstelle für Bergmannswohnstätten⁵, the housing association set up in connection with the miners' housing levy of 1920 and, ever since then, a central participant in the construction of miners' dwellings. The paper was written in October 1951, when the miners' housing act was becoming law and it was apparent that a major new building initiative was about to begin. Sent to the WAM, the paper's main purpose was to ensure that the NRW government's building policy took into account the Treuhandstelle's wishes.

¹ See for instance BAK-ZwSt.H B134,1365, BWoM 1326/4933/50, Memo, 4.10.1950.

² See chapter 5, p.226.

³ PA 2, 270, Kurzprotokoll of 8th meeting of the Sonderausschuss, 22.6.1949.

⁴ HStad NW73,136, Professor Knipping to WAM, 30.10.1951, annex: Knipping, 'Der Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', Essen, October 1952.

⁵ The Reconstruction Minister was in fact a member of the Treuhandstelle's controlling executive.

The actual architectural and architectonic demands made in the paper are very simple and can be summarised in a couple of sentences. The ideal house, argues Knipping, should have plenty of light and a good sized garden with a stall built in to the house so that the miner can keep small animals. The need for light and a garden in turn calls for a semi-detached, two storey building style.¹ Whilst this is more expensive than multi-storey flats, Knipping argues that the miners' house would not fulfill its function if the only criterion were to be low building costs. In any case, the higher costs of this design can be considerably offset by keeping the level of amenities fairly simple.² As far as the internal structure of the house goes, the most important feature is the combined living room-kitchen ('Wohnküche'), a traditional feature of mining homes.³

More significant, for our purposes, than the actual design proposed were the reasons for choosing these specific features and the hopes and expectations attached to them and the miner's house in general. The first thing that strikes the reader is the confidence with which Knipping speaks for the miner. The author has no hesitation in defining the miners' needs⁴ and without a trace of hesitation or embarrassment describes the miners' daily rhythm, even the mental state with which he returns home from work. 'Nach getaner Arbeit kommt der Bergmann nach Hause, körperlich sehr ruhebedürftig, geistig aber mit dem Wunsch, sich zu unterhalten. Er will seine Frau und seine Kinder um sich haben...'.⁵

The author's assurance is all the more striking when it is born in mind that at the time of writing, more than 50 percent of the housing lists were composed of

¹ Knipping, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', pp.1-2.

² Ibid, p.3.

³ Ibid, p.2.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

men who had been in mining for six years or less, most of whom had spent their formative years in other occupations.¹ This confidence was a pervasive feature of the housing establishment. There were hundreds of articles talking about the wants and needs of the miner, but until the Americans came and commissioned one, there was not a single survey of miners' wishes and preferences.² The German housing officials were ostensibly privy even to the deep-seated wishes of the miners' wife. The ECA representatives in the Ruhr noted wryly that 'der Bergmann hat viele Sprecher, vom Zechendirektor bis zum Gewerkschaftsvertreter. Es sind dies natürlich alles Menschen [sic! It should be 'Männer', MR], aber sie haben keine Hemmungen einem zu sagen, was die Bergmannsfrau haben möchte'.³ It was evident that Knipping and many other writers were operating with a mental image of the miner so firm that it allowed them to utter apodictical truths without the need for market research.⁴ Indeed market research would be almost irrelevant, since the policy makers were aiming to satisfy the miner's deep and unconscious needs rather than his mere subjective wishes.⁵

The most important of these unconscious needs relate to the garden, to the soil. At one level the garden provides a necessary compensation to mining work. The noise, the poor air and the artificial light at work make it imperative that

¹ Based on the sample in SoFoSt, 'Soziologische Erhebung zum Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm. Schlußbericht' (Unpublished Ms., Dortmund 1952), p.5.

² SoFoSt, 'Schlußbericht'; Elisabeth Pfeil, *Die Wohnwünsche der Bergarbeiter. Soziologische Erhebung, Deutung und Kritik der Wohnvorstellungen eines Berufes*, Tübingen 1954.

³ HStAD NW73,55, Translation (into German) of an MSA Housing Dept paper, dated 17.10.1952, German title 'Deutsches Kohlenbergarbeiter-Wohnungsbauprogramm. 2.Fortschrittsbericht', p.14. It is striking that in this German translation, the English 'men' was mistranslated as 'Menschen'. It is evident that in the climate of the day, the idea of male officials making these decisions was so much part of the order of things that the translator did not even notice the point the text was trying to make.

⁴ Even the composite nouns used (Bergmannswohnstätte and 'Bergmannssofa'), indicate the strength of the notion of a timeless 'Ur-Bergmann', transcending the vagaries of labour fluctuations and the changes of generations.

⁵ Knipping, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', p.3 and p.1 and even more pronounced in Franz Knipping, 'Die Treuhandstelle für Bergmannswohnstätten im rheinisch-westfälischen Steinkohlenbezirk', *Glückauf*, 1949, 85, 31/32, pp.570-573.

the miner received fresh air and the sun outside it.¹ At a deeper level, garden work confirms and sustains that close relationship to nature and the earth which is the mark of the true miner.² An urban way of life and the disassociation from the soil ('Grund und Boden') always bring the wish to change occupation and the miner does not remain a miner, or at least not one whose heart and soul are committed to mining.³ A little earlier in the text, another passage also conveys the importance of maintaining a close link with the soil. Knipping writes that it is particularly important that miners with children have this type of house 'in which the children will grow up and then, in turn, be acquainted with work in the garden'.⁴

These images reoccur in countless other places. In 1948, when miners' housing was just beginning to move from repairs to new construction, the Reconstruction Minister, aware that this was the first major new housing project in the whole of North Rhine-Westphalia, commissioned a number of architects to come up with new housing designs. There were, however, several features deemed too important to be left up to the whim of the architects and the ministry therefore specified them in advance. They were, almost without exception, precisely the points Knipping outlined above, again with special stress on low buildings, large gardens and the outhouse.⁵ The notion of the link between farmer and miner, of the symmetry between two different types of battle with nature continually resurfaces. The miners, the Reconstruction Ministry's Dr. Fütterer was glad to say to a group of foreign visitors, are not really 'Städter' at all and 'haben noch

¹ Ibid., p.1.

² Ibid, p.2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, p.1.

⁵ HStAD NW73,260, WAM, Memo, 'Der Wohnungsneubau für die Bergarbeiterfamilie', 4.10.1948; for the universal endorsement of large garden and pigsty, see also MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', *passtm.*

ein gesundes, ein unmittelbares Verhältnis zum Boden, zum Gartenbau'.¹ Even the miners' union shared a similar vision. 'Wohnen ist mehr als bloßer Aufenthalt innerhalb vier Wänden', wrote the IGB's housing specialists in a letter to the DGB in 1953, 'Wohnen ist für uns der Ausdruck einer Weltanschauung. Gerade unser Bergmann erstrebt das Eigenheim mit einem kleinen Garten, in dem er etwas Gemüse zieht, seine Hühner, Tauben und Kaninchen hält und nach der Arbeit sich entspannt...'²

Other planning proposals introduced an additional though related, 'romantic' vision, namely the idea of 'rooting' (verwurzeln) the newcomer. The simple house, the semi-rural atmosphere and the large garden were seen as vital ingredients in settling the newcomers and tying them to mining and the Ruhr. When in 1948 the Reconstruction Ministry, laid down that every house should have a vegetable garden and an integral stall, he did so not only to meet the wishes of the established miners, but also explicitly to help root the newcomers in local soil.³ In 1952, in a discussion of how to treat the youngsters in the hostels, the journal of the KfSA, 'Als Ziel sollte stets vor Augen gehalten werden die Erziehung des jungen Menschen zum eigenständigen Bergmann, zur Familiengründung, zu einem Leben mit Garten und zur Verwurzelung in der Umwelt'.⁴

Here, the image of the simple miner at peace with nature is fused with that of the newcomer 'growing roots' through work in the garden, a mixture present in Knipping's own work too, in his vision of the youngster being acquainted with

¹ NW73,55, WAM, Copy of untitled speech dated 4.12.1952, signed Dr.Fütterer, Abteilungsleiter I.

² DGBA File 'IGBergbau (1949-1966)', IGB Hauptverwaltung to DGB Vorstand, 21.3.1953. See also J.Triem, 'Wohn- und Lebensstil unserer Bergleute', in *Bergbau und Wirtschaft*, 1953, 6, pp.98-100, here p.98.

³ HStAD NW73,260, WAM IA/300, Memo, 4.10.1948.

⁴ *Mitteilungen der KfSA* 1952, 1/2, p.3.

garden work.¹ Sometimes this image was linked to a belief that many newcomers had their own rural, stable qualities that needed to be protected. When Dr. Fütterer argued that the miners were not really urban folk, he extended this praise to the newcomers too, and no doubt had in mind the many refugees from small town and rural environments who numbered amongst the new miners.²

Of course, it would be wrong to underestimate the (perhaps unconsciously) tactical element in Knipping's lyricism and other similar broadsides. The housing societies in general and the Treuhandstelle in particular were worried about a loss of influence. The specific problem for the Treuhandstelle was that it was already clear that the new Miner's Housing Law was not going to give it the same special function as had the earlier law of 1920. Knipping was trying to make sure his organisation was nevertheless closely involved in the building programme.³ Thus the notion that the miner had unconscious needs and that it was necessary for experienced experts to transform them into architectural reality was at the same time an argument for the continued involvement of the Treuhandstelle, which 'aufgrund ihres gesetzlichen Auftrages sich einzig und allein mit dem Bau und der Verwaltung von Bergarbeiterwohnungen befaßt hat'.⁴

All of the Ruhr housing societies were on the defensive in the early 1950's because the American ECA administration was leading a concerted attack on traditional building practices.⁵ The housing associations were worried that the

¹ See also Walter Forstmann's comments in 1949 about the function of the Pestalozzi villages. HStAD NW41,764, Forstmann, 'Ausführungen in der Aufsichtsratssitzung am 21.11.1949 über den Zweck und den Bau der Pestalozzistiedlungen in Dinslaken-Lohberg', 21.11.1949.

² NW73,55, WAM, Copy of untitled speech dated 4.12.1952, signed Dr.Fütterer, Abteilungsleiter I.

³ HStAD 73, 136, Knipping to WAM, 30.10.1951.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht'

ECA's idea of an architects' competition would result in outsiders taking over Ruhr building, would bring in new ideas and force the associations to make complicated and expensive revisions in their building methods in order to compete.¹ To a certain extent, therefore, the talk of the miners' needs was simply an attempt to legitimate existing practices. It was no accident that so many officials were agreed on the same housing design.² It was precisely this type of house that the Treuhandstelle and many other housing societies, particularly those building outside the densest urban areas, had traditionally built. There was more than a little disingenuousness in Franz Knipping's lyrical ode to the Wohnküche; the point about the living/room kitchen was that if the whole family congregated there, the cooking stove could double as the heating and the rest of the house could remain unheated. In most miners' houses until then the Wohnküche was the only heated room.

Nevertheless, there was clearly much more than tactics involved. The three related images - the simple miner with basic but modest needs, the miner reaffirmed through working the soil, and the newcomer rooted in the locality by the right house and especially the right garden - go a long way to explaining not only the strong commitment to established patterns of house construction,³ but also the hopes and expectations which the employers had of housing. 'Werden die vorher skizzierten Bedürfnisse des Bergmanns berücksichtigt', Knipping assured the Minister, 'dann erfüllt seine Wohnung neben der Unterbringung noch einen anderen Zweck. Sie macht den Bergmann zufrieden, erfüllt seine von der Natur als Folge seiner beruflichen Tätigkeit gegebenen Notwendigkeiten,

¹ In his paper, Knipping explicitly criticised the concept of a competition or building in the cheapest way possible. Knipping, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', p.3.

² For other voices with a similar visions, see for example HStAD NW73,100, WAM, Internal memo from Gruppe IA to Gruppe IIIB, 7.2.1951; NW73,55, WAM, Copy of untitled speech dated 4.12.1952, signed Dr.Fütterer, Abteilungsleiter I.

³ When the ECA had the temerity to suggest some new designs, it found itself confronted by an angry choir of housing establishment voices all singing the praises of the living room/kitchen and the pigsty. See MSA paper, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', *passim*.

ihm selbst meist unbewußt, und läßt den Wunsch des Berufswechsels erst gar nicht aufkommen'.¹ But if the wrong house were built, if the link to the land were broken, then the miner will be lost to his profession, 'er bleibt nicht mehr Bergmann, sicher nicht mit Lust und Liebe'.²

All 'mod cons': the challenge to romantic conservatism in housing design

In addition to the romantic-conservatives there were also, initially in small numbers, the 'modernisers' who believed that the miners should be given the chance to raise their standard of 'living-culture', as it was termed. Very often the 'modernisers', be they in the IGB or in the WAM, shared many assumptions with the romantic conservatives. But they challenged the image of the simple, rustic interior and called for such features as a separation of kitchen and living room, the introduction, where possible, of modern equipment and so on.³

The strongest challenge to the romantic-conservatives came from the Americans. The head of the ECA's (later MSA) department for industrial building, James Butler, organised a veritable crusade against what he saw as 'building by committee'. Butler believed that 'die bescheidenste deutsche Wohnung (ist) eine teure, solide aussehende, aber unpraktische Angelegenheit' and that the conservatism of the German building administration and housing associations was hindering the development of more modern building methods and houses with more modern amenities.⁴ In 1951, in an initial 45 million DM programme, the ECA failed to get many of its proposals adopted, partly because the programme was co-financed with German money.⁵ It therefore resolved in

¹ Knipping, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', p.3.

² Ibid., p.2.

³ HStad NW73,260, WAM IA/300, Memo, 4.10.1948.; HStad NW73,10, WAM, Internal memo from Ref. IA2 to Ministerialdirektor, 7.10.1952; IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1953*, p.740.

⁴ MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', pp.8-11.

⁵ On the negotiations see HStad NW10,90, DKBL to WAM 12.6.1951 and annex.

1952 to finance its own programme fully so that it would be able to control the conditions. Butler commissioned a major survey of miners' housing preferences, which at one stroke abolished a great many myths about the miners' supposed conservatism. The 1952 programme was for example preceded by a fully open competition between architects whereas in 1951, the ECA had only succeeded in achieving a very limited competition.¹

Both the survey and the MSA housing project which followed it gave the 'modernisers' a decisive boost.² The ECA buildings were mainly large estates composed of long rows of two storey houses each with a large garden. Apart from the generally unpopular long row, adopted for money saving reasons, new about the houses' design was the modern kitchen with built-in cooker and in some cases, an unheard of luxury, a fridge, central heating and modern bathrooms.³ Though there were a number of protests afterwards, the buildings were really a triumph for the MSA since they cost no more to build than the traditional miners' house.⁴ Within four years of the first MSA project, virtually all houses in the Miners' Housing Programme were being built with separate or semi-separated kitchens and mainly with built in cookers.⁵

The Americans saw the strength of the opposition to the programme as a sign that vested interests were being undermined. Certainly, there was anxiety that provision of fridges, for example, would force other builders to do likewise.⁶ But

¹ Ibid and HStad NW73,55, BWoM II56/51, Memo, 20.12.1951.

² See for example the WAM's responses to the survey in HStad NW73,10, WAM, Internal memo from Group IA, IA2 to Ministerialdirektor, 7.10.1952; Group IIIA 4, Memo, 18.12.1952.

³ MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', p.10ff.

⁴ Ibid. and 'Es ist gefuscht worden. ECA-Siedlung Essen mit nassen Kellern und gerissenen Wänden', extract from *Die Bergbauindustrie* 1953, Nr.4; Ferdinand Simoneit, 'Die Axt' in *Deutscher Bau-Markt* 1953, 52, 42, p.1143; HStad NW73,55, Copy of BWoM memo, 2.11.1953.

⁵ P.Christoffel, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau im rheinisch-westfälischen Steinkohlenbezirk' in *Deutsche Siedlungs- und Wohnungspolitik*, pp.343-346, here p.344.

⁶ HStad NW73,55, Min. f. Arb, Soz. u. W.bau VIA2 to MSA-Housing Mission, 31.12.1953.

at a deeper level, by challenging the myth of the simple miner with his simple unchanging tastes, the Americans were also challenging the myth of the house's power of integration. The Americans themselves saw housing purely in terms of a subjective incentive. As modernism spread during the 1950's, some of the initial hopes of miners' housing disappeared.

On the other hand, the acceptance of a modern interior did not necessarily mean acceptance of a purely functional attitude towards the house. There is considerable evidence that many of the German advocates of the new designs linked to their demands the hope that by raising the status and self-esteem of the miner they would create a settled and contented social class. This applied to the IGB, which, from having been lined up with the romantic-conservatives, became an enthusiastic adherent of housing 'durch die die Wohnkultur unseres Berufsstandes gehoben wird.'¹ Yet, as this formulation implies, the union did not relinquish its belief in housing's socially integrative powers. Some of the new labour-directors² seem to have made it their personal mission to raise the miners' social standing and self-esteem through better housing, as Walter Wille wrote in 1954:³

Ganz besonders wurde die Wohnkultur nach neuen Richtlinien durchgeführt. Es kam mir besonders darauf an, der Wohnung des einfachen Menschen die persönliche Note zu geben, vor allen Dingen ihn aus dem "Arme-Leute-Milieu" herauszureißen.

¹ Quote is from IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1953*, p.740. For examples of earlier stance, see the then IVB's hostility to the idea of a house without a cellar (HStad NW73, 135, SVR to Reconstruction Minister, 15.12.1947). For the importance of the ECA programme in changing union's attitude see Schulz's comments in MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', p.21 and IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1954*, p.662.

² The 'Arbeitsdirektoren' were the labour nominated members of the management board (Vorstand). The directors were introduced by the 1951 Codetermination Law, but generally were not nominated in the mines until late 1952/53, because of the company restructuring going on.

³ IGBEA Handakten Rudi Quast, file 'M.Assistenten Tagungen (Alt)', Walter Wille to Heinrich Imig, 28.6.1954, appendix: 'Erfahrung mit der Mitbestimmung'.

Amongst other things, Wille promoted the separate kitchen/living room, a proper bathroom, provision for motorcycles as well as the decent gardens that everyone could agree on.¹

Alongside modernising the house's amenities and promoting the bourgeois dining room, there were also attempts to improve the miners' taste in furniture. The IGB encouraged exhibitions of furniture appropriate for the smaller size of post-war housing.² The employers too, particularly the 'Vereinigung der Freunde von Kunst und Kultur im Bergbau' did their bit to provide the miners with what they saw as a valid and integrative aesthetic.³

*The joy of home-ownership*⁴

Alongside appropriate design, another strategy for enhancing housing's impact on workforce stability was promoting owner-occupied housing. As with many of the design proposals noted earlier, the aim was not just to give the miners what they wanted (or what the housing authorities felt they wanted) but to create the sort of environment that would, it was believed, bind them to their profession and cause them to grow roots in the locality.

Like most of the proposals mooted after 1945, the idea of giving workers the chance to become property owners was not a new one. It had received a considerable boost in 1931 when the Brüning government had passed an emergency decree providing for the establishment of *Kleinstedlungen*, owner-

¹ Ibid.

² IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1953*, p.727ff.

³ See Heinrich Winkelmann, 'Heim und Herd und Sport und Spiel des Bergmanns', in *Westdeutsche Wirtschafts-Monographie, Folge I, Steinkohle Ausgabe April 1953*, cited in 'Die Entwicklung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaus in Herne', no author, no date, (1959) (available in Herne city archive). For more details on this, see chapter 9, p.434.

⁴ 'Freude am Eigentum', a section heading in Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1956*, p.25.

occupied houses for the unemployed with large vegetable gardens attached.¹ Over the following years, the idea was extended to long-serving members of the workforce and a considerable number of Kleinsiedlungen were built in the Ruhr. By 1939, 7,500 owner-occupied homes had been built by the Treuhandstelle für Bergmannswohnstätten alone.² Overall, though, owner-occupied homes remained a very small fraction of miners' housing.

In the post-war period up to 1948 there were neither materials nor finance available for new building. Public funds were swallowed up by repairs and the housing associations lacked their own resources,³ difficulties that the currency reform served only to exacerbate. The result was that the building of Kleinsiedlungen was extremely restricted both before and in the two years following the currency reform.⁴ When in Autumn 1948, the IVB appealed to the Reconstruction Minister to give financial support to prospective *Kleinsiedler*, the WAM regretted that it was unable to do so.⁵ Only at the end of 1949, did the Ministry feel able to make its first substantial contribution for the construction of owner-occupied homes for miners (500,000 DM)⁶ and even this would pay for less than 100 homes.

¹ A good general account is given in Deutscher Siedlerbund (ed.), *Die Kleinsiedlung und ihre Entwicklung. Ein Überblick über Sein und Werden der Kleinsiedlung und des Deutschen Siedlerbundes*, Hamburg 1960.

² Treuhandstelle für Bergmannswohnstätten (ed.), *Dreißig Jahre Treuhandstelle für Bergmannswohnstätten*, Essen, no date [1949], p.30; see also, for the housing societies belonging to the VSt, BBA 55,25300, F.Mönkemöller, '5. Jahre Wohnstätten-gesellschaften', 1938.

³ See the exchange between the Westfälische Wohnstätten AG and the building authorities in HStAD NW9, 145, Westfälische Wohnstätten AG to Oberpräsident of Westphalia Province, 21.1.1946; Oberpräs., Generalreferat IX AIV to SVR, 24.4.1946.

⁴ A number of modest schemes were proposed and a few actually implemented. HStAD NW73,458, WAM IA 303 to CCG(BE) Manpower Dept, 19.2.1948; NW42,912, paper from Nebelung, 'Vorschläge für die Beseitigung der Nachwuchsnot im Ruhrkohlenbergbau', 28.4.1948; Fütterer, 'Bergmannswohnstätten im Ruhrgebiet', p.450.

⁵ 'Die Mittel für Neubau sind so knapp', wrote the WAM, 'daß es nicht möglich ist...den Eigenheimstiedlern, für die Sie sich wärmstens einsetzen, wesentliche Beiträge zur Verfügung zu stellen', in HStAD NW73, 47, WAM to IVB, 28.10.1948.

⁶ BBA 8, 406, DKBL, Circular No.IV-31 to mining companies and collieries, 28.6.1950.

Even if more money had been available from the Land, it is unlikely that more than a small minority of miners could have made use of it. A key problem that had limited the number of miners becoming Kleinsiedler even before the specific problems of the wartime and post-war period arose, was that though the financial support from public funds was considerable, the owner-occupier still had to make a sizeable initial contribution himself.¹ Many miners found the money impossible to raise. True, the required financial contribution could be commuted to labour, whereby the miner himself worked on the construction site, but this was an exhausting business, requiring the miner to follow his day's work at the mine with more toil on the building site. The higher building costs of the post-war period made it if anything even harder for the miners to pay their contribution, generally fixed at 20-25 percent.² A further financial disincentive to buy ones' own home was that rents in the older mining properties were so very low. Once the miner had scraped the initial funds together, he would find himself with repayments more than twice as high as the typical rent in an older miners' estate.³ And of course there was the ever present fear that an accident or loss of health might make it impossible to maintain the payments.

In 1950 it seemed therefore as if 'Eigenheim' and 'Kleinsiedlung' would be little more than minor sidelines. Yet just four years later almost 50 percent of new houses built in the miners' housing programme were intended for owner-occupation.⁴ In a country where rented accommodation had traditionally

¹ See Knipping, 'Der Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', pp.3-4. The other problem noted by Knipping was the miners' resistance to the tie between the house and their profession, a tie which could affect their children. This is discussed below.

² 20% for Kleinsiedlungen and 25% for other owner-occupied homes. See WAM, Bestimmungen über die Förderung des Wohnungsneubaues (Kleinwohnungen und Kleinsiedlungen) im Lande Nordrhein-Westfalen (NBB)', *Ministerialblatt für das Land NRW* 1951, 4, 19, pp.182-200.

³ Christoffel, 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau im rheinisch-westfälischen Steinkohlenbezirk', p.344; Ges.Verb. File 'Wohnungswesen. Ausschuß 9', Minutes of Housing Committee on 24.3.1955.

⁴ Ges.Verb. File 'Wohnungswesen 4 Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm 41 Programme. 1954-1961 Bezirksausschuß Sitzungen', Minutes of the 12th Bezirksausschuß meeting, 16.12.1954.

dominated the urban housing market and particularly the working class housing market this was a truly dramatic social innovation.

What had happened? One factor, of course, was that the volume of funds released by the new coal mining levy made it easier for the state to increase grants to individual projects so as to reduce the burden on the miner. However, even more decisive than the volume of funds was the energy with which the ECA and even more the Federal parliament and government pursued the idea of owner-occupied housing. The ECA's idea was that it would provide a positive incentive to remaining in mining and producing more coal.¹ For their part, the German proponents went beyond the notion of a simple incentive, believing that owning a house would help the new miners strike roots in their local environment.² For an English-speaking reader, the logic of these proposals is less obvious than to a German one because, unlike Britain, in Germany at that time (and indeed now) the reselling of one's own home was most uncommon. The 'second hand' housing market was small. Most people who became owner-occupiers either inherited housing or had new houses built. The new house was then seen as an investment for life.

The Federal government's hopes also involved a more far reaching goal of social integration. It is worth remembering that the original idea behind the Kleinsiedlung had had little to do with promoting workforce stability - it was, after all, initially aimed at the unemployed - and more to do with social and political stabilisation. The idea was that the vegetable garden and livestock would enable the occupant to be substantially self-sufficient, thus reducing his living costs sufficiently to enable him to pay off the mortgage and to weather

¹ MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', p.10.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1367, Deutscher Bundestag 2.Wahlperiode 1953 Drucksache 817, 'Schriftlicher Bericht des Ausschusses für Wiederaufbau und Wohnungswesen über den Entwurf zur Änderung des Gesetzes zur Förderung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaues im Kohlenbergbau', esp. p.2.

periods of unemployment. Beyond making the workers 'krisenfest' there was the longer term hope that giving them the chance to own property would enhance their self-esteem and their integration into society.

It was this goal that the Federal government revived in the post-war period but now coupled with the hope that the refugees too could be compensated for their losses and reconciled with their new home. In a volume extolling the virtues of the owner-occupied home which appeared in 1951, the year the Miners' Housing Law was passed, Paul Lücke, one of the housing experts in the Bundestag, argued that, as well as protecting the occupants against future economic crises, home ownership '...garantiert die Bildung echter Persönlichkeitswerte, die allein der Vermassung, die uns aus dem Osten droht, Einhalt gebieten können'.¹ Other contributors developed the same theme.²

Because of the emphasis placed on the compensation and integration of refugees, they were the first group amongst the miners to benefit from the commitment to owner-occupied housing. Funds were initially made available by the Soforthilfegesetz of 1949³ which raised a levy on all property owners in the Federal Republic to create a refugee aid fund and directed that some of the money raised should go towards providing refugees with appropriate housing.⁴ From the end of 1949 onwards, the NRW Reconstruction Ministry put a limited amount of funds aside which could be made available in the form of a subsidy (ie non-

¹ Paul Lücke, 'Die Funktion des Eigenheims in der Sozialordnung unserer Zeit', in *Die Funktion des Eigenheims in der Sozialordnung unserer Zeit. Vorträge und Referate des Dritten Deutschen Volkshelmsstättentages*, Hannover 1951, Bielefeld 1951, pp.57-71, here p.59 & p.65. Lücke was a leading light of the Parliamentary Committee for housing and reconstruction.

² Friedrich Lütge, 'Die Funktion des Grundeigentums in der Rechts- und Sozialordnung unserer Zeit', in *ibid*, pp.7-18, here p.12.

³ 'Gesetz zur Milderung dringender sozialer Notstände (Soforthilfegesetz - SHG) 8.8.1949', in *Gesetzblatt der Verwaltung des Vereinigten Wirtschaftsgebietes* 1949, 28, pp.205-214.

⁴ 'Aufbauhilfe', cf. SHG, §44.

repayable) to refugees wishing to build their own home.¹ In November 1950², the HAfSH made additional funds available via the regional housing authorities to help home purchase for refugees who did not have any means of their own. The refugees received an interest free loan (sometimes a straight subsidy) to cover the contribution to the house price which they would normally be expected to find from their own funds.³

For miners as a whole, 1951 was the year in which the drive for owner-occupation really took off. When, in October 1951, the Minister for the Marshall Plan set up a special committee to enhance productivity in coal mining,⁴ he specifically mentioned the desirability of owner-occupation.⁵ A special sub-committee for housing was set up with federal, regional and industrial representatives.⁶ Over the following two years it was to concern itself extensively with making it easier to acquire a home. In the Miners' Housing Law, owner-occupied housing was given a clear priority over all other types of housing.⁷ The impact of this commitment was manifest in the financing provisions introduced by both the German and the ECA building programmes 1951-1952. Instead of the customary 20-25 percent, the miners now had to find only 10 percent of the house price in advance and even for this element, the state was willing to offer interest-free loans.⁸ This was almost as good as the deal

¹ WWA F35, 3554, DKBL, Circular No.IV-1 to mining companies and collieries, 7.1.1950.

² The funds were not actually made available in NRW until March 1951.

³ HStad NW10, 13, WAM IIIB 6 to Regierungspräsidenten, 10.3.1951; WAM, Erlaß, 'Bestimmungen über die Gewährung von Beihilfen als Ersatz für fehlendes Eigenkapital', 10.3.1951.

⁴ See BAK-ZwSt.H B149, 672, BAM Abt.IIa1, Memo, 2.10.1951.

⁵ Ibid, p.4.

⁶ Unterausschuß III. Records are in BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1372.

⁷ Cf. §3, BAWBG.

⁸ WWA F29, 368/2, DKBL, Circular No.IV-7 to mining companies and collieries, 4.2.1952, annex: paper by Ludwig Fehlemann, 'Die wichtigsten bauwirtschaftlichen und finanztechnischen Gesichtspunkte, die bei der Durchführung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogrammes 1952 von Bedeutung sind', 22.1.1952; MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', p.16.

offered the refugees.¹ Miners could now buy houses for little more than the cost of renting a newly built house and with payments that were less than 20 percent of gross income (though rents for older properties were still considerably cheaper).² 'Die neuen Bestimmungen', noted the DKBL, 'erleichtern ...den Eigentumserwerb für den Bergmann in einer Weise, die bis vor kurzem kaum für möglich gehalten wurde. Bei gutem Willen kann der Bergmann fast risikolos bei einem verhältnismäßig nur geringen wertbeständigen Sparen zu einem Eigentum gelangen'.³

Though no one in the Ruhr was actually hostile to owner-occupied property, this sudden transformation met with a certain amount of scepticism. Many officials and housing society experts believed that few miners would respond.⁴ In any case, the 1952 building program was mapped out before the new terms became known so that it was dominated by rented property. The pressure from parliament and state to alter this emphasis showed just how important a measure the state believed it to be. Though the subcommittee for miners' housing had in December 1951 set an advertisement campaign in motion, this was not enough for the Parliamentary Committee for Housing and Reconstruction which in June 1952 called for more intensive measures.⁵ This was more evidence that housing was seen as more than just an incentive. The parliamentarians were not content just to offer home ownership to those who expressed interest: they wanted actively to create that interest.

¹ Refugees had the advantage that even while paying the pre-payment the house belonged to them, whereas other miners became owners only when they began paying off the remaining loans. In addition refugees could pay off the pre-payment in 25 years, other miners had to do it in 10. See WWA F29, 332, DKBL, Circular No.VI 1-15 to mining companies, 6.7.1953.

² MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', p.15.

³ Fehlemann, 'Die wichtigsten bauwirtschaftlichen und finanztechnischen Gesichtspunkte'.

⁴ MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', p.15.

⁵ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1372, Unterausschuß III, 3rd Report, 5.12.1951; 6th Report, 3.7.1952.

In November the committee came to the Ruhr. At the centre of discussions was the question whether more could be done to promote owner-occupied homes. An SVR representative at a meeting with the committee argued that the achievement hitherto - almost 30 percent of 1952 building being in the form of owner-occupied property - was considerable. But the deputies were not satisfied. They contended that most miners could be persuaded to buy their own property and stressed the importance of broadening property ownership as a bullwark against 'infiltration' from the other side of the Iron Curtain.¹ As a result the NRW regional committee responsible for distributing funds raised by the miners' housing levy (Bezirksausschuß) decided to commit 40 percent of funds in 1953 to owner-occupied homes, a decision warmly received by the Federal Housing Ministry.² Mines' building proposals which envisaged more than 60 percent of their building in the form of rented property were rejected.³

Other voices too urged the transformation of the miners into a property-owning class. In a joint appeal distributed to all the mines, the Protestant and Catholic church argued that:⁴

Nur aus einer ethischen Haltung heraus und geschult in der Verantwortung um ein kleines Eigentum wird der Bergmann willig sein, die Aufgaben der sozialen Gemeinschaft in einem großen Industriebetrieb wie innerhalb des ganzen Volkes auf sich zu nehmen.

The miners' union too, strongly endorsed the idea of owner-occupied housing. Even before Düsseldorf and Bonn resolved to offer the favourable financial terms, the IGB had been demanding more support for home buyers.⁵ In 1952 the

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33175, 'Kurzprotokoll über die Besichtigungsfahrt des Bundestagsausschusses für Wiederaufbau und Wohnungswesen in das Ruhrgebiet, 13/14.11.1952', 20.11.1952.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 3727, Unterausschuß III, 7th Report, 28.10.1952.

³ BBA 55,12200, Nr.13, Minutes of Bergausschuß Meeting, 29.9.1952.

⁴ WWA F29,335, appendix to General Director, DKBL, Circular Nr.IV-14 to mining companies, 8.3.1952; See als BBA 42,65, 'Der Mensch im Bergbau. 1. Rundbrief aus der gemeinsamen Sozialarbeit der Konfessionen im Bergbau', no date.

⁵ HStad NW10,83, SVR, Memo, 28.9.1950.

IGB carried out a survey of its members which revealed that interest in acquiring a house was much higher than some of the Ruhr sceptics had originally thought.¹ When the subcommittee on miners' housing looked into difficulties still inhibiting house purchase at the end of 1952, the IGB was one of the strongest supporters of an increased home-ownership ratio.

The IGB shared many of the goals, hopes and fears of the government. It was noteworthy that when Frau Dr. Brökelschen of the Parliamentary Housing Committee expressed her thoughts on property and Eastern infiltration, she had no qualms about presenting her views even though union representatives were present.² Writing in the union journal *Bergbau und Wirtschaft* in 1953, labour director Triem criticised the employers for having too long neglected the 'Eigentums- und Entproletarisierungsfrage'.³ The DGB, which was rather sceptical about the whole project, believing it to be more a government hobby-horse rather than what the miners really wanted, got a flea in its ear when it put this thought to the IGB. 'Es ist an der Zeit', responded the miners' union, 'durch eine verstärkte Eigentumsförderung allen jenen Menschen zu helfen, dieHaus und Herd verloren haben und wieder zu einer neuen Verwurzelung auf eigener Scholle und zu einem eigenen Heim kommen wollen...' and went on to assert the enormous interest present amongst the miners for owner-occupied homes.⁴ Like the parliamentarians, the IGB saw eminent dangers in big estates full of rented accommodation. Initially it had joined in the protests against the ECA's idea of building big estates for fear of losing control to radical elements⁵ and in its response to the DGB it said of multi-storey rented accommodation, 'Ihr Weg

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 3727, 6th report of Unterausschuß III and IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1952*, p.429.

² 'Kurzprotokoll über die Besichtigungsfahrt des Bundestagsausschusses'.

³ Triem, 'Wohn- und Lebensstil', p.99.

⁴ DGBA, File 'IGBergbau (1949-1966)', IGB Hauptverwaltung to DGB Vorstand, 21.3.1953.

⁵ HStAD NW73, 100, WAM IIIB1, Memo, 17.7.1951 .

führt geradewegs zum Lautsprecher mit zentral eingeschalteter Welle, Kontrolle der Zeitung, Besucher usw'.¹

Incentive or fetter

The problem with using housing as a means of workforce integration was deciding what to do if the occupant left the company. Either the right to be a tenant was linked to the employment contract, which meant that unemployment was followed by eviction and, for those tenants still in employment, might well allow the employer to use the threat of eviction as a means of discipline. These were very high social costs. Alternatively, the tie between employment and housing was not enforced, which might well encourage the very behaviour it was supposed to prevent: would-be tenants or home-owners would work in the mines just long enough to obtain a dwelling and then leave.

The legislators of the Weimar Republic had already had a crack at this problem. In general terms they were hostile to company housing and by means of tax incentive and penalties, encouraged employers to subsidise public utility societies instead of building for themselves.² On the other hand, the state wanted to ensure that the houses built with the considerable public funds flowing into the miners' housing programme would continue to be available to the mines. It therefore designed a compromise solution whereby housing built with the help of the levy was tied to the *industry* rather than to any particular mine, thus reducing the danger of employers abusing their power. A further restriction on the tie was that it lasted for only twenty years from the day the house was built.³ These restrictions applied only to houses built with the aid of

¹ IGB Hauptverwaltung to DGB Vorstand, 21.3.1953.

² Josef Lang, 'Die geschichtliche und räumliche Entwicklung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaus im Ruhrgebiet' (Diss., Cologne University, 1952), p.86ff.

³ Gesetz über Bergmannsiedlungen, 10.3.1930, in *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1930, I, p.32 and *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1934, I, p.354; Monika Sturm and Hartmut Hohmann, 'Der (Continued overleaf.)

the miners' levy. There was still a large stock of older company housing, and indeed of public utility housing funded by other means, whose tenancy agreements allowed employees leaving a mine to be evicted.

Legislation and regulations in the early post-1945 period went further in weakening company ties. Though it was prepared to provide funds for repairs to existing company housing, NRW, for instance, gave no aid towards the construction of new company properties.¹ The tax incentives provided by the 1949 tax law² were largely denied companies who did their own building. Most important of all was the First Federal Housing Law of 1950 which laid down that company housing could in future only receive public funds if the tie between employment contract and tenancy agreement dissolved once the tenant had been in company employment for more than five years.³ This was a considerable extension to previous legislation since it was phrased broadly enough as to affect not only housing belonging to a particular company but also housing tied to an industry.

As far as owner-occupied housing was concerned, NRW introduced the ruling that companies assisting their employees to become owner-occupiers were allowed to maintain their control over the property for three years, during which time the prospective owner could be evicted if he left the company. Thereafter, as owner of the property the employee could no longer be evicted. The company had the right to increase the speed of repayments and the interest

Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau im Ruhrgebiet nach 1945 unter dem Einfluß der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung des Steinkohlenbergbaus', (Diplomarbeit, Bielefeld University, 1977), pp.78-79.

¹ HStAD NW10,92, WAM, 'Bestimmungen über die Förderung des Baus von Bergarbeiterwohnstätten', 24.3.1948.

² See chapter 5, p.245.

³ §20, Erstes Wohnungsbaugesetz, 24.4.1950, *Bgbl* 1950, 16, pp.83-88.

on the loan but such increases could not exceed what the mortgagee was able to afford.¹

It therefore looked in the post-war period as if general social-political considerations would be allowed to outweigh the economic desideratum of maintaining housing for the industry. However, in 1950-51 there was some intense lobbying by the DKBL and the Economics Ministry. The DKBL was critical of both NRW's general financing regulations and fiercely critical of the five year limit in the housing law.² Though unable to alter the law, it did enlist the support of Federal Economics Ministry officials who put the industry's case forcefully to their colleagues in the Housing Ministry.³ Presumably because of the Economics Ministry's influence, the Miners' Housing Law of 1951, while maintaining the principle that housing could not be tied to a particular colliery,⁴ introduced a ferocious link between housing and mining employment which reversed not only the First Housing Law provisions but also Weimar legislation.

Whereas the Bergmannssiedlungsgesetz of 1930 had settled for a 20 year tie, housing under the 1951 act remained 'permanently' tied to the industry, in other words until the loan from the mining levy funds had been fully repaid. A tenant

¹ Cf. para 95 of the WAM's 'Bestimmungen über die Förderung des Wohnungsneubaues (Kleinwohnungen und Kleinsiedlungen) in Lande Nordrhein-Westfalen (NBB)', in *Ministerialblatt für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen* 12.3.1951, 4, 19, pp.182-200.

² See WWA F35,3549, DKBL, Circular No. Cj 48 to mining companies, 1.8.1950 and the DKBL's comments on the NBB in DKBL, Circular No.IV-7 to Mining companies and collieries, 4.2.1952, part II.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, BWoM 1334/4797/50, Memo, 15.8.1950.

⁴ In fact, moving from one pit to another could still have some negative consequences for the miner because in such cases collieries making loans to potential home-owners were allowed to raise the interest. In addition, some collieries continued to try to evict tenants (ie of rented accommodation) who had changed pits. The IGB fought a fierce battle against these moves but it was only in 1954 that a clear court decision on evictions was obtained. As far as the home-owners were concerned, the revised mortgage agreements progressively increased the pressure on employers to negotiate with the new employer in cases where miners had gone from one pit to another. IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1952*, p.431 & *Jahrbuch 1954*, p.671; WWA F29, 367/1, DKBL, Circular No.Cj 69 to mining companies and collieries, 5.9.1952.

leaving mining even after long service would be liable to eviction.¹ The most invidious conditions applied to owner-occupied property. If, for example, a miner died and his son inherited the house before the loan had been paid off (a very likely event, since the loan took 66 years to pay), the son would be obliged to enter the mining industry or else lose his right to the house. Similarly a miner's widow, though she herself could stay in the house, could lose her right to it if she married a non-miner. In addition, the loss of right to the house was initially intended to mean not just, as in NRW's other new housing legislation, having to pay the loan back faster and at a higher rate of interest than previously but actually losing the house. The act laid down that houses were to be sold as 'Reichsheimstätten' which meant that they could be bought back at a price unfavourable for the sellers if the stipulated conditions were not met.²

Even before the legislation was on the statute book, the housing authorities began a rear-guard action to strengthen the occupants' rights. The NRW Reconstruction Ministry informed the Federal Housing Minister that supplementary regulations for NRW would contain a clause preventing the houses from being issued as 'Reichsheimstätten'.³ In the event, the supplementary regulations did not contain this clause.⁴ However, there are indications that the Ministry was able to make its influence felt so that in such cases forced purchases were not in fact undertaken.⁵ Since, under general

¹ Employees *retiring* from the company would not be affected. Employers had long accepted pensioners' rights to continued occupancy. Pensioners continued to be by far the single largest category of non-active miners in mine-owned housing.

² See the BAWBG, 23.10.1951 §5 and HStad NW9,85, WAM, Internal memo from Gruppe IB to IVC, 13.11.1951.

³ HStad NW9,85, WAM IVC to BWoM, 24.11.1951.

⁴ WAM IIIB1, Memo, 21.12.1951, in Heinz Tostorff, *Der Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau. Ein Kurzkommmentar über das Gesetz zur Förderung des Bergarbeiterwohnungsbaus im Kohlenbergbau*, Essen 1952, p.35ff.

⁵ Confirmation that the Reichsheimstätte regulations were not being used to the miners' disadvantage came in 1954 when the IG Bergbau called for all houses to be issued as Reichsheimstätten because of the (tax and other) benefits this brought the miner. See IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1954*, p.672.

housing laws, repayments could never be raised to the point where the occupants could no longer afford them, this was a major change in the impact of the law.

Together, the NRW Reconstruction Minister and the Federal Housing Minister found a subtle way to alter the slant of the housing programme without any legislation, namely, by stipulating the conditions which agreements between mortgagee and lenders had to contain. An example is given by miners who had taken a loan to substitute for the 10 percent initial contribution (*Eigenleistung*) they were normally expected to pay. Until this 10 percent had been paid, the miners were technically not yet house owners and could be evicted if they left the industry. In 1952, however, the DKBL was forced accept a new model loan agreement which in such an eventuality restricted the employers' sanctions to increasing the rate of repayments. This was more favourable to the mortgagee than even NRW's general housing regulations.¹ In addition, the agreements ensured that housing was tied to the industry for no longer than 20 years.²

The most dramatic changes came in 1952-1953. Under pressure from the Parliamentary Committee for Housing and Reconstruction, the mining productivity subcommittee for miners' housing looked into the reasons still inhibiting miners from becoming property owners.³ As a result of the committee's deliberations a number of changes were now introduced. Amongst other provisions, the widow who remarried did not automatically lose her right to the house; adult children inheriting the house too were freed from the tie as long as at least part was sub-let to a mining tenant.⁴ Finally, towards the end of

¹ WWA F29, 367/1, DKBL, Circular No.Cj 69 to Mining companies and collieries, 5.9.1952 and annex: Darlehensmustervertrag über die Gewährung von Arbeitgeberdarlehen zur Förderung von Bergarbeiter-Kleinsiedlungen und Bergarbeitereigenheimen.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1372, BAM IIa1, Memo, 14.5.1952.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 3727, 7th report of the Unterausschuß III, 28.10.1952.

⁴ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 1365, 'Ergebnisprotokoll über die Sitzung vom 4.Februar über die endgültige Fassung der Musterschuldurkunden und Verträge für Eigenheime und Kleinsiedlungen', no date [Feb. 1953].

1953, the DKBL was forced to accept a new set of loan conditions in which the grounds for terminating the loan did not include the occupant leaving the industry at all!¹ The only listed grounds now were the normal technical reasons such as defaulting on payments and so forth. Exactly how this affected the DKBL's legal position is not clear, since the new wording of the model agreements was in direct contravention of the 1951 law.² About a key decision in the following year, however, there was no doubt however: when the Miners' Housing Law was renewed in 1954, the support given to owner-occupied properties became even more marked and the link between job contract and house was limited to ten years.³

In effect, two goals were in conflict. The priority of workforce regeneration confronted the aspiration to create a broad property-owning working class. The housing authorities believed that the general socio-political goals which owner-occupation were intended to fulfill would be fatally compromised if the property was burdened with the rigid and long-lasting conditions originally laid down in the Miners' Housing Law.⁴ Thus the *societal* integration strategy was progressively given greater priority than workforce regeneration. Of course, the two goals were not necessarily in conflict. There was the hope that by making the conditions for house ownership less irksome, the miners would voluntarily choose to stay in the industry - and this may even have been partially successful. The point was, however, that the drive to make home-ownership easier was not *primarily* orientated to the interests of coal mining, but to broader socio-political goals.

¹ See WWA F29, 367/1, DKBL, Circular No.Cj 92 to mining companies and collieries, 19.11.1953, annex, esp. §11 (1) & (2). For the earlier version of the §11, see DKBL, Circular No.Cj 69 to mining companies and collieries, 5.9.1952.

² WWA F29, 367/1, DKBL, Circular No.Cj 92 to mining companies and collieries, 19.11.1953.

³ 'Schriftlicher Bericht des Ausschusses für Wiederaufbau und Wohnungswesen', esp. p.3.

⁴ See, eg, HStad NW9,85, WAM IVC to BWoM, 24.11.1951.

In this context it is worth noting that even when mine-owners did have the right to evict, the eviction very often failed because of a provision in federal housing control legislation that tenants could be evicted only if suitable housing was available for them elsewhere.¹ The situation worsened in 1954 because, as a result of a NRW ruling, some of the mining companies' rights to nominate tenants for vacant housing not actually belonging to them were removed.² The general problem of evictions was not unique to coal-mining but faced by many industries. In 1954, a BWiM enquiry to the mines on the subject elicited a reply not from the UVR but from the Housing Committee of the Association of Chambers of Commerce.³ The committee's representations were to no avail. Here, as in the question of the Zweckbindung, social policy considerations were allowed to carry the day.

Housing's impact on the integration of the new miners

By 1954, the waiting time for a house or apartment had at most mines dropped to less than a year. Of course, there were mines which by virtue of particularly heavy bomb damage and a poor financial position were still suffering from a severe shortage of family accommodation,⁴ but by and large the acute housing shortage present at the end of the late 1940's had been solved. In 1955, most companies were in a position to offer all prospective new miners an apartment within six months.⁵

¹ §30, Wohnraumbewirtschaftungsgesetz, Bgbl 1953, I, pp.97-105.

² StaM Regierung Arnsberg, 5.143, Report of the Verbindungsstelle der Regierungspräsidenten Arnsberg, Düsseldorf, Münster for May 1953.

³ Ges.Verb. File 'Wohnungswesen Ausschuß 9', Minutes of housing committee meeting, 2.3.1954.

⁴ The Friedrich Krupp Bergwerke being a notable example, see Ges.Verb. File 'Wohnungswesen 4 Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm 41 Programme 1954-1961 Bezirkssauschuß-Sitzungen', Table 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau', Essen 30.6.1956.

⁵ See, for instance the 'Wegweiser' for potential recruits produced by the Hamborner Bergbau AG in Ges.Verb. File '300-301.1, Ausbildung von Neubergleuten'.

What was the impact of all this building on the workforce? In the pre-1951 period, when the miners' building programme limped along on limited funds, housing was seen by most observers in the Ruhr as absolutely decisive for creating a stable and productive workforce. 'Die Frage der Beständigkeit der Neu-Bergleute steht im ursächlichen Zusammenhang mit der Lösung der Wohnraumsfrage', commented a manager from the Concordia mine in 1949.¹ As wastage increased in the 1950-51 period, the clamour for more housing only increased. A major report on the mining industry produced by the US High Commissioner's office in November 1951 noted that 'there is general agreement that miners' housing is the No.1 requirement for stabilizing the workers and increasing efficiency since there is presently a very high labor turnover'.² Yet towards the end of 1952, a year after the miners' levy had been introduced, the Federal Economics Ministry submitted a report to the Miners' Housing Subcommittee (Unterausschuß III) which showed that the increased building rate had not had a measurable effect on wastage.³ True, in 1953, when the time came to consider whether a renewal of the miners' housing levy was still desirable, all the members of the subcommittee still believed that it was.⁴ It was noteworthy, however, that when the Federal Housing Minister wrote to his colleague in the Economics Ministry for arguments that could be used in parliament to justify renewal, it was a rather uncertain reply that came back. After contending that housing was still important to reduce wastage and strengthen productivity the Ministry went on, 'Auch in diesem Punkte kann man skeptisch sein hinsichtlich des durch den Bergarbeiterwohnungsbau zu

¹ BBA 8,384, Concordia to DKBL, Abteilung Arbeitseinsatz, 25.2.1949.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 21258, Office of the US High Commissioner for Germany, P.R.Division, 'The West German Coal Industry since 1945', 14.11.1951, p.6.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 3727, 7th report of Unterausschuß III, 28.10.1952.

⁴ BAK-ZwSt.H B134, 3727, 8th report of the Unterausschuß III, 7.8.1953.

Erreichenden, aber das Argument dürfte zu verwenden sein'.¹ The chairman of the UVR's housing committee, Dubusc, noted that between 1949 and 1953 almost 50 percent of the Klöckner miners had obtained new company housing. Yet productivity had not risen and, Dubusc contended, would probably not have fallen if there had been no new apartments. Somewhat surprising, given this judgement, was his view that miners' housing was nevertheless probably worth it in the long run.²

The evidence adduced by these experts suggests, at least at first sight, that miners' housing was *not* worth it. Was the whole drive for miners' housing, then, based on an illusion?

One question must be whether the romantics had built houses that were actually unsuitable for the newcomers. No doubt a two/three storey building or a reasonably sized garden were acceptable to most, but could it really be assumed that the newcomers would want to live in the kitchen or to keep a pig or a goat? It should be remembered that where the stall for the animals was built directly on to the house it took up a fair amount of the ground floor space.

In addition, many of the houses produced by the Treuhandstelle für Bergmanns-siedlungen and other housing associations at least until the early 1950's balanced the cost of offering a fair sized garden and keeping the number of storeys down by economising on the standard of amenities. In the early years the Reconstruction Ministry, which as has been seen was not without out its own romantic conception of the miner, encouraged this. In a paper on the best types of social housing for NRW, the Ministry distinguished between blocks of flats for the fully urbanised population and two storey housing for the small town and

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33315, BWIM to BWoM, 26.7.1954.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33148, Copy of Memo. concerning the Meeting of Studienausschuß III des Beratenden Ausschusses 'Arbeiterwohnungsbau, Produktion, Produktivität' on 2.6.1954 in Luxemburg, 2.6.1954.

rural communities, the latter building style being, as a subsequent note observed, outlined with the miners particularly in mind. Because the miners and other similar groups still revealed 'stark ländliche Züge' in their 'Wohnsittung', argued the Ministry, the houses could be built with a 'vergleichsweise geringen Aufwand an technischen Einrichtungen'.¹

What was the new miners' response to this? The available material is somewhat contradictory. The MSA reported, for instance, that they had found many instances of houses with stalls being offered to tenants who said they had no intention of keeping animals and resented the loss of living space.² According to the miners' housing investigation, however, 83 percent of miners interviewed expressed an interest in having some sort of outhouse for animals. It was evident that the newcomers had not been unaffected by the prevailing attitudes and habits and in addition many of them came from rural or small town backgrounds.³ Neither report was free from its own ideology. The MSA was keen to bring a modern lifestyle to what it saw as a situation where the conservatism of the builders was maintaining archaic and primitive living conditions. For his part, Günther Ipsen, the driving force behind the SoFoSt report, was not without his own romantic image of the miner and was keen to demonstrate that the traditional miners' cottage (Bergmannskötten), prevalent before before the Ruhr's expansion really began, had somehow filtered through into the minds of modern miners.⁴

What can be said is that the differences between outsiders and locals were less significant than generational differences. This applied particularly to the

¹ HStAD NW73, 259, WAM IA/300, Memo, 25.3.1950 and attached note to Gruppe I

D.

² MSA, '2.Fortschrittsbericht', p.7.

³ SoFoSt, 'Schlußbericht', pp.10/10a & p.25.

⁴ Ibid., p.11a and interview with Prof. Croon, 9.4.1984.

Wohnküche, which younger families of all backgrounds rejected.¹ To that extent, Professor Knipping was advocating a design unsuitable for most young mining families. Thanks to the survey, within a short time the separate kitchen came to dominate housing construction.

As far as the gardens were concerned, there were two groups amongst the new miners with specific wishes different from the established men. On the one hand there were the refugees, many of whom wanted a large garden and animals; had the investigation not been blinkered by its vision of the 'Berg-Kötter', it would have recognised that the refugees as a whole were more likely than the established men to want substantial land and livestock.² On the other hand, there were many young new miners where the wife wanted to work. They had no time to look after animals.³ A variety of different housing designs was therefore required.

True of all groups, however, was that the attitude to vegetable gardening and animal keeping was changing rapidly as material conditions improved. In a company estate belonging to the Friedrich der Große mine, for example, the inhabitants had before the war kept over 200 pigs, a couple of dozen sheep and there had even been one cow. By 1954, the local newspaper recorded that there weren't five pigs left on the whole estate, though a few inhabitants still wanted their chicken run. Whereas in the whole of Herne there were 97 goats in 1950 (along with 656 sheep, 77,319 chickens, 1,785 geese, 1,141 ducks and 135 bee hives), by 1953 the number of goats had fallen to 24. (Sometime between 1963 and 1965 the last Herne goat quietly disappeared).⁴ Here too, therefore, many

¹ SoFoSt, 'Schlußbericht', p.31

² Ibid. and interview with Dr.Croon, 9.4.1984.

³ SoFoSt, 'Schlußbericht', p.3.

⁴ 'Siedlung Holper Heide wird modernisiert', *Westfälische Rundschau*, Herne edition, 10.7.1954; 'Die Erinnerung ist geblieben. Ziegen bei uns ausgestorben', *Herne Zeitung*, 9.11.1965; 'Kleinvieh nicht nur für den Suppentopf', *Herne Stadtanzeiger*, 8.9.1981.

houses were being fitted with features which would not be used or used for only a short period.

Writing in 1980's Britain with a general awareness of the architectural and social disasters created by modernisers in the 1950's and 1960's, it is hard to resist the impression that the Ruhr did not really suffer from the conservatism of the planners, designers and builders. Many of the undesirable features could be altered by the occupants and by the end of the decade, a great many barns and stalls had been converted to garages for motor bikes. The most general problem with German social housing from the 50's was that to save time and expense the housing was often too small. This affected the miners too,¹ but they were much better off than most. Some of the new estates suffered also initially from a shortage of communal amenities,² but in general a positive, if sometimes somewhat cramped housing environment was on offer. It should also be borne in mind that the newcomers were very aware of the cramped housing conditions existing for other population groups. Almost one third of adult householders in NRW did not have an apartment to themselves.³ It was noteworthy that in a survey of reasons why men left the pits in 1954, discontent with housing conditions was virtually never raised.⁴

¹ SoFoSt, 'Schlußbericht', pp.13-14.

² On the problems with new estates, see the autobiography of the former new miner Berger, *Der Pütt hat mich ausgespuckt*, p.107ff. It was the characteristic Ruhr problem that the pace of workforce growth led to house building unaccompanied by the appropriate infrastructure. The problem both pre-1914 and post-1945 was that the local towns, particularly those in the northern part of the Ruhr, did not have enough money to pay for infrastructure. Because of this the Miners' Housing Law provisions were changed so that some of the housing funds could be used to meet infrastructural expenses. See HStAD NW109, 134, WAM III A2 to BWoM, 20.5.1953; Ges.Verb., File 'Wohnungswesen, Ausschuß 9', Minutes of meeting, 2.3.1954; BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 4392, 'Begründung zu dem Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Änderung des Gesetzes zur Förderung des Wohnungsbaus im Kohlenbergbau vom 23.10.1951', no date [1954].

³ Abe and Echterhoff, *Das Vest - ein dynamischer Wirtschaftsraum*, p.153.

⁴ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, BWIM IIIA1 33079/54, Memo, Annex 8 and accompanying document with no author (almost certainly Ullrich, UVR). 'Bemerkungen zu der Sondererhebung zur Ermittlung der Abkehrgründe', no date, p.4.

Why then was housing unable to prevent the high wastage of the 1950's? Many occupants of miners' housing could easily reach a steel mill from where they lived and it was indeed the mines of Essen, Bochum and Dortmund situated near steel works and other big industrial employers which suffered some of the highest wastage levels. This competition in mining's back yard, coupled with the fact that evictions were now difficult to carry out (and that it was easier for home owners to quit the mines while retaining their house) reduced housing's ability to compel the occupants to remain in the workforce. There was evidence that quite a number of recruits came with the intention of obtaining a house and then leaving the mines.¹ On the other hand, the extent of this phenomon should not be exaggerated. Though the *number* of tenants in company houses no longer employed by the mines grew, the *proportion* of houses with such tenants did not. In 1948 just under 9 percent of tenants in colliery-owned properties were employed outside the mines (this figure does not include pensioners). In 1951 the proportion had fallen to a little under 8 percent. In 1955, for all mining houses whether mine-owned, public utility or privately owned, the proportion was just under 7 percent. Even the proportion of pensioners had fallen. In 1951 they amounted to 18 percent of tenants in company houses but by 1955 had fallen to about 14 percent of all miners' housing.²

A more important factor reducing housing's effectiveness in controlling wastage was the fact that it came so late. By 1951-52 many mines had got themselves into a hiring-wastage cycle from which it was hard to extricate themselves. Forced in the post-1948 period to hire mobile young men because there was no

¹ STAM Regierung Arnsberg, 5.143., Report of the Verbindungsstelle der Regierungspräsidenten Arnsberg, Düsseldorf, Münster für Bergarbeiterunterkünfte, May 1953.

² Sources 1948 and 1951 in WWA F29, 333/1, DKBL, Circular No.IV-9 to Mining companies, 12.2.1952, annex; 1955, calculated from figures in StaM Regierung Arnsberg, 5.143., Report of the Verbindungsstelle der Regierungspräsidenten Arnsberg, Düsseldorf, Münster für Bergarbeiterunterkünfte, March 1955.

family accommodation,¹ the mines found in the early 1950's that they had increasingly little chance to choose people likely to stay.² Though the mines increasingly recognised the desirability of hiring married men who could be offered a home, their demand for labour was too large to allow more than a small proportion of it to be met by married men.³ Because many of the people they hired in the 1950's were single and had expressed no intention to marry they would, at least in the short term, be unaffected by the housing programme. In 1952, for example, the IGB estimated that at the very outside 10,000 of the 36,000 or so occupants of the adult mining hostels might be interested in obtaining a house.⁴ A SoFoSt survey came to similar conclusions.⁵ This was born out by housing allocation figures produced a year later which revealed that of 28,400 miners given a house in that year, only 2,804 or about 10 percent had come from the camps and a further 2,188 were new recruits. (The rest were long-standing workers in unsatisfactory accommodation.)⁶ Yet it was precisely amongst the group of young hostel occupants that wastage was at its highest. Thus there was a sizeable proportion of wastage which housing could do nothing about.

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33091, BWiM IIIA1 33079/54, Memo, Annex 8 and accompanying document with no author (almost certainly Ullrich, UVR), 'Bemerkungen zu der Sondererhebung zur Ermittlung der Abkehrgründe', no date, p.5.

² The comment of the DKBL's Manpower and Training Committee in 1952 that 'die Zechen befinden sich in einer Notlage, weil ihnen das Polster im Belegschaftsvolumen als notwendige Voraussetzung fehlt' could apply equally well to the problem of choosing new recruits as it did to actual subject of discussion at the committee, namely ensuring that recruits got a proper introduction to the work. See Budde, 'Gründe und Auswirkungen', p.40.

³ In 1950 some mines began to recruit married men, though in view of the housing lists they were generally less than keen. By the mid-1950's virtually all mines were recruiting married men by preference. See eg. StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 46, ABB, Circular 8/51, 13.7.1951 and Stam Arbeitsamt Bochum, 27, AAHerne, Nebenstelle Wanne-Eickel, Reports on new miner recruitment, 31.1.1955 and 26.5.1955.

⁴ The 10,000 figure in IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1952*, p.440ff and Kadow's remarks in IGBEA Handakten Rudi Quast, file 'M.Assistenten Tagungen (Alt)', Minutes of 3.Meeting of the 'Herner Kreis', 24.6.1953.

⁵ AZG File 'I 1 26 Zuweisung von Arbeitskräften aus anderen Bezirken (Umschüler)', Minutes of 2nd meeting of Arbeitsgemeinschaft Arbeitsamt-Bergbau, 8.5.1953, p.4, comments of Dr.Buchholz.

⁶ StaM Regierung Arnsberg, 5.143., Report of the Verbindungsstelle der Regierungspräsidenten Arnsberg, Düsseldorf, Münster für Bergarbeiterunterkünfte, 20.1.1954.

The delay in developing a major housing initiative was exacerbated by the fact that the established workforce was frequently allowed to come first on the housing list. With the exception of some refugee housing and also the MSA programme, housing allocation decisions were made within the colliery by management and works council. Usually a whole series of different criteria, such as length of service, family size, whether the miner was part of the mine's emergency accident service and so on, were employed to decide an individual's position on the housing list. The mines had to consider not only the desirability of obtaining and integrating new labour but also the rest of the workforce's 'moral economy', particularly the attitudes of established miners who were quick to believe that newcomers were being overprivileged. It was only logical for management to make sure that the established miners were kept reasonably content.

This tendency was strengthened by the fact that, to avoid causing uproar through unpopular decisions, management was keen to delegate a lot of the responsibility to the works council. The councillors generally tried hard to be fair and were wont to say that decisions about housing were the hardest they had to make,¹ but it was only natural that they should see to it that the established workforce was well looked after.² Though the established miners frequently complained that they were having to wait longer than the new miners, this was not the case. In the mine Shamrock 3/4, for example, where such complaints were as frequently heard as anywhere else, 65 percent of housing recipients up to 1951 were from the established workforce and only 35 percent were newcomers, despite the fact that the latter made up 70 percent of the workforce and

¹ BBA 35, 237, Belegschaftsversammlung Emscher Lippe, 21.5.1950.

² BBA 35, 236, Belegschaftsversammlung Emscher Lippe, 23.5.1948.

presumably an even higher proportion of those seeking housing.¹ And Shamrock, it should be added, was a mine that approached its newcomers with more understanding than most. The cost of social peace, therefore, was that newcomers were slower to obtain housing than they might have been had purely productive criteria applied.²

Perhaps the most important and obvious point, however, was that the expectations associated with miners' housing had been exaggerated from the start. The power of the romantic images of hearth and garden had raised hopes that were not really justified in the labour market of post-war Germany. The image of the simple miner and the romantic-agrarian model of integration were poor guides to the real integration process. The employers had relied on housing too much when they should have been trying to change the working experience.

All that having been said, there is ample evidence that without the rapid provision of reasonable quality housing, the mines would have been far worse off than they were. Without housing, as the labour exchanges repeatedly testified, the mines would have had difficulty in the 1950's being able to solicit any long-term (ie not seasonal) recruits at all.³ In addition, the colliery workforces would probably have disintegrated. It is worth re-emphasising what the Hibernia figures⁴ have already indicated, that a considerable proportion of the newcomers proved highly stable additions to the workforce. This is borne out by figure 10. Earlier statistics have indicated that the workforce share of

¹ BBA 32, 3055, Minutes of Belegschaftsausschuß Meeting, Shamrock 3/4, 3.10.1951.

² It should, however, be added that the newcomer who proved himself in the mine or established contacts with the local community could often find some contact which speeded up the rate at which he obtained a house. Interviews with Hermann Kuhn, June-July 1982, Josef Laslop, 9.5.1984, Alfons Nowak, 2.7.1985.

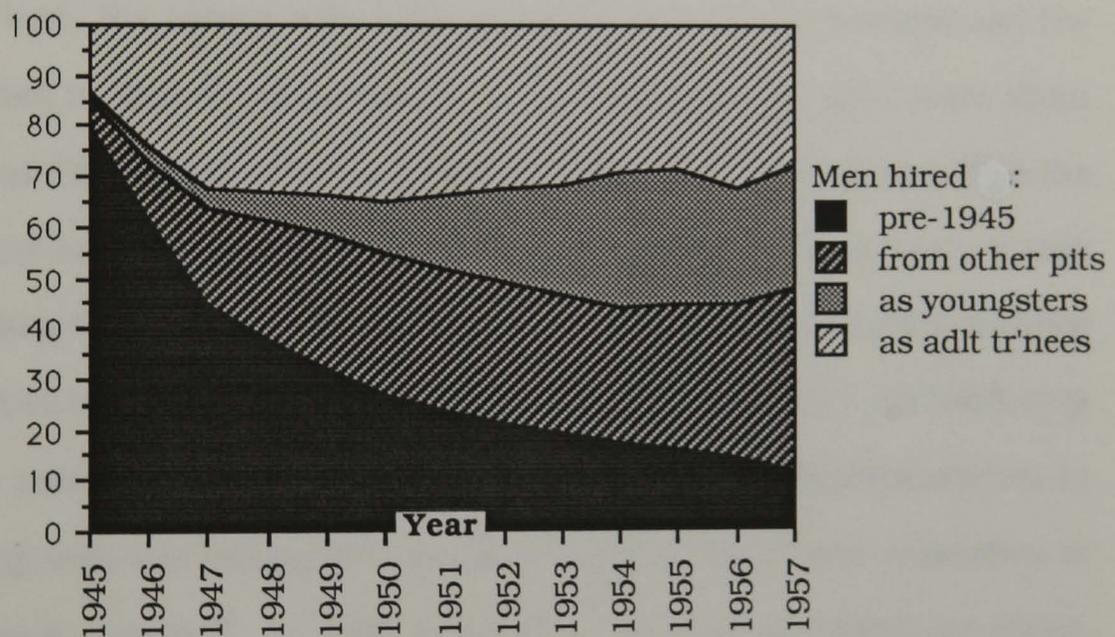
³ See eg StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 11, AA Do to ABB, 25.11.1954; StaM Arbeitsamt Bochum, 27, AA Herne, Nebenstelle Wanne-Eickel, Reports on new miner recruitment, 31.1.1955 and 26.5.1955.

⁴ See chapter 7, table 18, p.333.

trainees with less than three year's experience fell rapidly during the 1950's;¹ thus, figure 10 which shows that present and former trainees - irrespective of how long they had been in the mines - constituted a fairly stable proportion of the workforce indicates that many of the earlier new recruits actually remained in the mines throughout the 1950's.² It is unthinkable that the mines would have been able to maintain this core workforce had it not been for mining's lead over other industries (and general public housing programmes) in providing reasonable family accommodation.

Fig. 10: Composition of underground workforce according to status when hired
(Mine Shamrock 1/2)³

% of workforce



¹ See chapter 7, fig. 9, p.334.

² Other mines' statistics corroborate this general pattern. In 1952 something between 1/4 and 1/3 of the underground workforce at the mines Hannover and Hannibal was composed of new miners who had been in the industry for more than three years. The wastage amongst these men was low. See Budde, 'Gründe und Auswirkungen', p.60, table 30 and pp.22-25, table 13. The tables do not actually name the two pits involved but it is evident from the list of sources that they are Hannover and Hannibal.

³ Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1956*, p.5. The Shamrock figures are not entirely representative of the Ruhr since the Shamrock workforce barely grew at all in the period 1951 - 1956, whereas the Ruhr underground workforce increased by more than 10%. In addition, the proportion of new miners is a little above average.

If the housing programme was moderately successful at securing a core workforce for the industry, albeit one that fell short of the numbers needed, was it also moderately successful at creating the integrated property-owning class? In numerical terms, the results were substantial. Between 1950 and 1960, almost 50,000 owner-occupied properties were built and, in addition, some housing companies, notably the Treuhandstelle, sold off formerly rented property to their tenants.¹ By 1957, some 10-15 percent of the mining industry's employees must have been owner-occupiers. But the really intensive drive to expand owner-occupation was short lived. By 1955 it was coming up against the problem that the number of prospective buyers was diminishing.² One problem, particularly in the more heavily urbanised areas, was the shortage of suitable land; the pressure on space made blocks of flats desirable and few miners wanted to become owner of a flat. And of course the old worries about invalidity and the ensuing payments-burden continued.³ In 1955 and 1956 the UVR and IGB both recognised that they had got into a situation where if they built according to the miners' wishes they would contravene the Federal Housing Minister's guidelines by creating too many apartments for rent.⁴ In 1956, they avoided the problem by using regional funds to build rented accommodation so that housing with the mining levy funds produced the correct proportion of owner-occupied property.⁵ In 1957, the Bezirksausschuß agreed that the owner-occupied quota should not be taken too rigidly and, indeed, the proportion of

¹ UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1958-1960*, table facing p.94.

² Ges. Verb. File 'Wohnungswesen 4...1954-1961 Bezirksausschuß-Sitzungen', Minutes of 12th Bezirksausschuß meeting, 16.12.1954.

³ WWA F29, 368/2, Clipping from *Westfälische Rundschau* (Hattingen), 17.10.1955 on IGB survey. 76% wanted a detached family house but only 48% would consider becoming owners because of anxiety about ill health etc.

⁴ Ges. Verb. File 'Wohnungswesen 4...1954-1961 Bezirksausschuß-Sitzungen', Table: 'Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm 1956 (Vorschau)', no date; UVR to Schulz, IGB, 15.3.1956; Memo on the meeting of the 'Kleiner Ausschuß' of the Bezirksausschuß, 9.4.1956.

⁵ Ges. Verb. File 'Wohnungswesen 4...1954-1961 Bezirksausschuß-Sitzungen', Minutes of 15th Bezirksausschuß meeting, 5.4.1957.

owner-occupied housing was from 1956 onwards far lower than it had been previously.¹

As in many other aspects of the mines' and the state's integration policy, both the hopes and the anxieties that lay behind these programmes were relatively short lived. The voices warning against Eastern infiltration, or demanding the miner be given 'ein kleines Eigentum' were increasingly seldom heard. Whereas the 1954 renewal of the Miners' Housing Law had considerably strengthened the pro-ownership provisions, the 1957 law contained no further intensification. No doubt both the clear limits to the miners' willingness to become buyers and the general political stabilisation of the Republic combined to make owner-occupation an increasingly marginal issue.

The political impact of the housing itself is hard to gauge. It is, in fact, difficult to make *any* clear assessment of the miners', and particularly the new miners', political views, let alone to distinguish between home-owners and others. Recent work on the way in which the SPD attained hegemony in the Ruhr in the course of the 1950's has stressed the role of party patronage in creating large 'client groups' reasonably well disposed to the party.² Amongst this 'patronage' was the power of the SPD-dominated works councils in the allocation of scarce resources, above all housing. Certainly, many new miners obtained a house because they had a decent connection to the local union organisation and the works council. It is perfectly possible, therefore, that the impact of the building programme was to strengthen the hold of the SPD. This was probably not what the CDU-dominated Bundestag had had in mind!

¹ *Ibid.* and UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1958-1960*, table facing p.94.

² Above all Michael Zimmermann, "Geh zu Hermann, der macht dat schon". *Bergarbeiterinteressenvertretung im nördlichen Ruhrgebiet*, in Niethammer (ed.), "Hinterher merkt man", pp.277-310.

2: Integration through segregation. Building hostels for the apprentices

The princes and the paupers: hostel conditions prior to 1948

The other living environment over which the employers took considerable care was the apprentice hostel. In the pre-currency reform period, when conditions in the adult camps were frequently appalling and colliery managers were doing little more than passively and resignedly watch the great mass of often unwilling labour flow through the mines, the apprentice hostels were generally in good order. This was partly because the labour exchanges were able to put more pressure on Military Government and employers to provide decent accommodation for the youngsters.¹ But even more, it reflected the fact that those employers sufficiently aware of the importance of apprenticeships to build or convert hostels for the youngsters also believed that good quality accommodation had to be made available.² True, even apprentice hostel amenities and facilities remained very limited, but that was the result of the unavailability of everything from wardrobes to table tennis bats rather than a lack of employer interest.³ As the LAA Mining Office wrote in a circular to the labour exchanges, it was true that not everything in the hostels was 'in Ordnung... aber wo in Deutschland ist alles in Ordnung?'⁴

That the quality of apprentice hostels was offered not out of general welfare motives but in the interests of 'Standesbildung' was made abundantly clear by the enormous discrepancy between the standard of apprentices' hostels on the

¹ OBADA I6303/568/47, ABB to OBAD, 25.2.1947.

² OBADA I6301/969/47, ABB, Circular to all colliery managements, 17.3.1947; IGBEA BR7, ABB to IVB, 28.4.1947.

³ On the shortage of equipment, see BBA 35, 36, Emscher-Lippe to RCD4, 26.6.1946.

⁴ OBADA I6301/628/47, ABB, Circular 8/47, 22.2.1947.

one hand and the lack of provision for the admittedly smaller number of non-local young trainees. True, until 1948, *all* youngsters from outside the Ruhr should theoretically have been taken on as apprentices. This was a condition made by the labour exchanges to ensure that the outsiders were well looked after.¹ In fact however, as many observers testified, the workforce included a considerable number of young trainees coming from outside the Ruhr, most of them housed with adult trainees in the camps.² In most cases they had been hired as trainees because the mines were generally loath to take on youngsters over 15 as apprentices.³

In 1947, the NRW Social Ministry gradually became aware of this problem and demanded that young trainees be segregated from their adult counterparts, a demand echoed by the Mining Office of the regional labour administration,⁴ and also by a Military Government Youth Officer for the Recklinghausen area, Captain Elphick, whose involvement was prompted by a strong feeling of distaste at the compulsory recruitment of youngsters for the mines.⁵ Elphick set up a committee to look into the living conditions of young miners and discovered that of all the mines in his area, only one separated the under 18s in the camps from the rest.⁶ Yet despite all the pressure the employers were extremely unwilling to do something about the problem, indeed even to acknowledge that it existed. At a time when the labour administration estimated there to be more than a thousand juveniles in adult camps, the DKBL's

¹ Ibid.

² HStAD NW41, 761, Social Ministry IIIB/6, Memo, 7.8.1948.

³ OBADA I6301/969/47, ABB, Circular to colliery managements, 17.3.1947.

⁴ HStAD NW41, 746, Social Ministry NRW IIIB/6 to colliery directors, 17.7.1947; IGBEA BR7, ABB to IVB, 28.4.1947.

⁵ OBADA I6303/1757/47, Elphick, 'Die Bedingungen junger Arbeiter in den Zechen', 15.1.1947.

⁶ Ibid.

senior manpower officer argued there to be none at all.¹ The difficulty for the employers was that they did not want to dilute the special atmosphere of the apprentice hostel or undermine the attempts to create a new elite by including other types of young labour. It was noteworthy that when Elphick outlined his plan to help the young trainees at a meeting in September 1947, Köker, the training and social services director of the giant Hibernia company and a man generally considered to belong to the more progressive wing of mining directors, suggested that their work would be more effective if they concentrated on the apprentices' hostels and ignored the rest. Elphick retorted that it was precisely 'the rest' that was the problem.²

After 1948, the problem of the young trainees remained. True, most hostels were soon reasonably well appointed, but the mines continued to house youngsters with older men. In 1951, the KPD put a motion to the NRW parliament calling for something to be done about the primitive conditions in the youngsters' hostels. Though nobody else at that stage liked agreeing with KPD motions and hostel conditions were generally seen as good, Weber, the Social Ministry's officer for occupational and training questions, had to concede that there had been 'ein ausgesprochenes Stagnieren in der Betreuung der Bergjungarbeiter' and above all that the DKBL had not responded to his repeated calls for separate juvenile hostels.³ It was only in the post-1953 period, when the labour market situation forced the mines to take every recruit seriously, that they began to offer separate accommodation for juvenile trainees.⁴

¹ HStAD NW41, 747, Soz.Min III B/6, Memo. 25.7.1948; 41, 761, Soz.Min IIIB/6, Memo, 7.8.1948.

² OBADA I6303/2572/47, Minutes of meeting on 5.9.1947.

³ HStAD NW41, 746, Antrag der Abgeordneten Schabrod, Seindler usw, KPD, 4.4.1951; Weber to Dr.Laarmann, 16.5.1951.

⁴ Stam Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 46, ABB, Circular to NRW labour exchanges, 28.12.1953.

True for all types of mining hostel, however, was that after the currency reform, when table tennis bats were to be had for the asking, the standard of amenities and facilities improved rapidly. This was particularly the case in the apprentice hostels.¹ In many there were no more than three beds to a room and the hostels were equipped with table-tennis rooms, small gymnasia, dark rooms, their own libraries and so on.² Of course, the companies could recover some of their outlay by charging the apprentices for accommodation. Yet given the high standard of the hostels and the fact that apprentices earned less than their adult colleagues, it is not surprising to find that apprentices in the hostels were heavily subsidised, even more than their increasingly subsidised adult counterparts. In 1956, for example, the Hibernia company laid out 1,355 DM per new miner in the hostels but 1,786 DM for each apprentice.³

Integration or segregation?

Now that their endeavours were no longer dominated by the struggle to obtain even the most basic items of equipment, the employers were able to think more seriously about the optimum type of hostel environment. Fairly early on, a central dilemma emerged which throughout the 1950's was to bedevil attempts to integrate the apprentices. On the one hand, the employers wanted the newcomers to strike roots in the Ruhr and become permanent members of the workforce. On the other hand, they did not want them to assume the worst

¹ For a while, the shortage of funds induced employers to cut corners by building very large apprentice hostels with a relatively high density of occupation. However, the Social Ministry was able to nip this development in the bud and soon most hostels were of an extremely high standard. HStad NW41, 764, WAM memo, 21.2.1951; Soz.Min IIIB/5c to Finanz.Min. NRW, 12.3.1951.

² 'Männer von Morgen', *Junior Magazin* 1952, 12, pp.474-477.

³ Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht* 1956, p.15 and p.20 Apprentice figures are for hostels only. The apprentice villages were somewhat cheaper. It should be noted that these figures date from a time when the mines faced acute competition on the adult labour market and were subsidising the new miner hostels much more heavily than a few years earlier. If figures from 1952/1953 were available the contrast would have been even more marked.

habits of the existing workforce.¹ In addition, the controlled environment in the hostels represented a marvellous opportunity to transmit the 'right' values to a captive and impressionable 'audience'. The question, therefore, was: integration or segregation?

The dilemma was summed up perfectly in a paper presented to the Kommission für soziale Aufgaben (KfSA) (the welfare organisation run jointly by DKBL and IGB) by Klaus von Bismarck, director of the Sozialamt of the Protestant church in Westphalia. The paper contained his thoughts about the best way to build and run a hostel. On the one hand, noted the (generally progressive) churchman, it was an often observed fact that the girls from the local community exerted an unhappy influence on apprentices. On the other hand:²

ist das Streben zu bejahen, die Jungen mit ihrer neuen sozialen Umwelt in Verbindung zu bringen, insbesondere unter dem Gesichtspunkt, daß ihre Seßhaftmachung und Verwurzelung nur dann für die Dauer möglich ist, wenn sie die Menschen ihrer neuen Heimat, ihre Lebensgewohnheiten, Sitten und Gebräuche kennen und schätzen lernen.

What was the answer? On the whole segregation seems to have been emphasised at the expense of integration. This was in part because both state and church reinforced the mines' wishes with their own fears and ambitions. As Klaus von Bismarck makes clear, there was widespread anxiety about the negative impact of proximity to the adult community. Drunken new miners and promiscuous miners' daughters seem to have been the chief dangers facing the apprentices.³ Von Bismarck himself concluded that, in the final analysis, building a hostel near a miners' estate was more negative than positive.

¹ See chapter 6, p.272ff.

² HStAD NW41, 747, 'Zusammenstellungen des Sozialamtes der evangelischen Kirche in Westfalen über die in einigen Berglehrlingsheimen angefallenen Erfahrungen', no date [1951].

³ For a powerful example of this fear of predatory women leading the innocents astray, see Erwin Jochum, 'Das sexuelle Problem unserer heutigen Jugend und der Beitrag der Bergberufsschule zu seiner Lösung', *Mitteilungen für die Bergberufsschulen* 1954,6, esp. p.10.

Bismarck's guidelines were very influential¹ and were adopted largely unchanged as the KfSA's own.² Most hostels were built a good distance away from the mining estates. At least one reason for the comprehensive provision of facilities in the hostels was the desire to keep the apprentices out of the wrong company.³

The organic village

Perhaps the most innovative experiment, and a sign of just how far the employers were prepared to go to create their new workforce, was the establishment of special youth villages to house the apprentices. In 1948, the Pestalozzi Association - an organisation dedicated to disseminating the educational ideas of the the 18th century Swiss educational theorist Pestalozzi - approached the VSt's housing associations to see whether they would consider building a Pestalozzi village in the Ruhr. Together Heinrich Vormbrock, a leading figure in the housing associations, and Walter Forstmann, board-member of the GBAG, persuaded the chairman of GBAG to endorse an experiment with two Pestalozzi villages, one in Lohberg, site of a mine belonging to the GBAG's Hamborn group and the other in Bochum.⁴ The idea then caught on elsewhere and by 1956 there were 33 villages with, in all, 5,500 places, equivalent to almost a third of all the accommodation provided for apprentices and Knappen.⁵

¹ Erzmonet, 'Was tut der Ruhrbergbau für seinen Nachwuchs', p.173, caption to illustration 8.

² The KfSA version did, however, suggest it might be possible to build a hostel near 'einer modernen Bergmannssiedlung'. Presumably what they had in mind was a new estate of owner-occupied properties where they felt that the behaviour of the residents might be expected not to set a bad example. *Mitteilungen der KfSA* 1952, 1/2, p.5.

³ See, for example, the comments of the Bezirk VI (Dortmund) of the IG Bergbau Bezirk VI(ed.), *Jahresbericht* 1954, p.24.

⁴ HStAD NW41, 764, Forstmann, 'Ausführung in der Aufsichtsratsitzung vom 21.11.1949'.

⁵ Calculated from Arbeitsgemeinschaft Heimstatthilfe im Lande NRW (ed.), *Verzeichnis der Jugendheimstätten in NRW*, NRW 1956. Evidently not all of these were (Continued overleaf.)

Generally, the villages consisted of a series of large houses with big gardens in the manner of the Kleinsiedlung, each house occupied by a 'parent' family and six youngsters. Each village had its own leader and, with time, its own community centre. The village parents obtained their accommodation free plus a monthly payment from which to feed the youngsters. The village leader supervised the parents and watched over the youngsters.¹

The attractions of the village concept were manifold. Although the cost factor was probably not decisive, it was certainly significant that the villages cost the employers less than conventional hostels.² The initial investment was lower because they qualified both for housing subsidies from the Reconstruction Ministry and for the more usual apprentice hostel funds.³ The Reconstruction Ministry funds were particularly important because they were given at a much more favourable rate of interest than some of the loans with which builders of normal apprentice hostels had to make do. The low or non-existent interest charges and the low staff costs made the Pestalozzi villages cheaper to run as well.⁴ In addition, the houses could in the future be used as normal housing.

The real logic to the village concept was that it was seen as a way of overcoming the conflict between integration and segregation. The idea was to introduce the youngsters to the best of the mining community in a controlled and monitored

affiliated to the Pestalozzi Association, which in 1956 counted 30 villages with 3,600 youngsters amongst its members. Klinkert Papers, File 'Sammlung Vorstandssitzungen', Minutes of executive meeting of Jugendheimstättenwerk e.V. Pestalozzidorf-Vereinigung (JHStW PV), 17.10.1956.

¹ Otto-Wilhelm Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer für die Gewinnung eines bergbaulichen Nachwuchses' (Diss., Cologne University, 1956), *passim*.

² A point stressed by the Gruppe Hamborn's training director when asked for his view on the Pestalozzi villages. See Klinkert Papers, Minutes of the first meeting of the JHStW PV, 31.7.1948.

³ HStAD NW41, 764, Minutes of meeting on 21 November 1950 in Essen with DKBL, 23.11.1950; Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.164 which shows the enormous difference between the repayments burden on a typical apprentice hostel and that in the case of the Pestalozzi village - the former being almost 4 times as high per occupant.

⁴ Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', pp.163-164.

environment. The parents would be carefully chosen so as to avoid contaminating the youngsters with the 'Untugenden' of the mining community and to transmit the appropriate values and outlook.¹ The villages themselves were carefully situated well away from the miners' estates, 'Schmuckkästchen inmitten einer grünen Landschaft' as Walter Forstmann put it.² Thus the dangers of the wrong sort of company would be avoided but at the same time so would the risks associated with communal living in a large hostel. The degree to which contact with the local community was sought tended to vary from village to village depending on the outlook of the village leader.³

The resonance which the idea of the miners' village enjoyed and the way in which it was implemented reveal once again many of the myths about the integration process which abounded in the mining industry. The houses were built on the Kleinsiedler pattern in part so that the youngsters could be rooted by means of garden work.⁴ Here the notion of deep roots in local soil emerged very strongly.⁵

Man will die jungen Bergleute gleich mit der Arbeit im Stall und Garten vertraut machen und besonders ihre Lust und Liebe zur Kleintierzucht und Gartenbewirtschaftung erwecken, damit sie einmal auf eigenen Kleinsiedlerstellen oder als Einlieger sich fest in der Nähe ihrer Schachtanlage verwurzeln können

Though there was talk of 'Ausgleich', of pleasant compensation for the work underground, it was evident that the garden work was far more than that because it was actually a duty for the youngsters. When at a meeting of the village leaders it was suggested that the youngsters were not necessarily all that interested in gardening, the chairman of the Pestalozzi Association came down

¹ JHStW PV (ed.), *Pestalozzieltern im Pestalozzidorf*, Essen 1952, cited in Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.25ff.

² Walter Forstmann, 'Die Erziehung zum Eigentumsgedanken', *Die Volkshelmstätte. Monatszeitschrift des Deutschen Volkshelmstättenwerks* 1955, 7, 5, pp.1-5.

³ Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.72.

⁴ 'Die Pestalozzidörfer des Bergbaus', *Bergfreiheit* 1951, 8, pp.17-19.

⁵ Forstmann, 'Ausführung in der Aufsichtsratssitzung vom 24.11.1949', op.cit..

very strongly on the issue, reminding all present that the villages had been created specifically 'um der Jugend den Grund und Boden nahe zu bringen'.¹ The designation 'Dorfälteste' rather than 'Dorfleiter' for the village leaders indicated the desire to resurrect the notion of an intact, quasi-rural community. Another virtue of the housing design in the eyes of the village founders was that the apprentices would feel encouraged to become owner-occupiers. 'Das Ziel ist dann endgültig erreicht', wrote Walter Forstmann, 'wenn der Weg zur Familiengründung im eigenen Heim geebnet ist'.²

From a fairly early stage it became apparent that though wastage remained low amongst apprentices esconced in either hostels or villages, it rose rapidly in the first months after the youngsters qualified as Knappen. The Obad wrote in a 1950 report to the Economics Ministry that there was no point in building beautiful apprentice hostels if the 17 or 18 year old youngster was then abandoned to his own devices and forced to take an expensive private room or live in the rougher climate of an adult hostel. As experience showed, wrote the Obad, 'ist dieser Übergang der Augenblick, in dem sehr viele Knappen der unfreundlichen Wohn- und Lebensverhältnisse wegen dem Bergbau trotz eben erfolgreich abgeschlossener Lehre den Rücken kehren'.³

One might have thought that the goal of integration into the local community would make it desirable to find suitable lodgings with a mining family - and many Knappen did indeed become subtenants in miners' housing - yet both employers and the state were reluctant to encourage this. There was the feeling that the householders would not exercise the right sort of influence and a fear that the values and attitudes being inculcated in the apprentice hostels would be

¹ Klinkert Papers, File 'Niederschriften der Arbeitstagungen und Vortragsveranstaltungen', Minutes of meeting of village leaders, 10.12.1958.

² Walter Forstmann, 'Die Erziehung zum Eigentumsdenken', p.5.

³ OBADA I6301/774/50, Obad to VfW (sic!), 13.3.1950, annex: 'Bericht über die bergmännische Nachwuchs- und Ausbildungslage im Oberbergamtsbezirk Dortmund'.

dissipated.¹ As a result, the employers pressed for funds to construct hostels for the Knappen as well.² Evidently, at one point, there were plans to construct enough hostels so that every single graduate apprentice would find a place there,³ though in the end, financial shortages (and probably also the inclination of many Knappen themselves) led to the more modest achievement of something over 3,000 places in hostels designated specifically for Knappen and a further 1,600 in hostels for young miners in the 18-25 age range.⁴

Various other attempts were made to sustain the special environment and protect the former apprentices from the ostensibly negative characteristics of the mining community. In the Pestalozzi villages, the youngsters were not expected to leave after qualifying and there was the hope that they would go straight from the village to marriage and their own home without ever passing through the intermediate phase of full exposure to the mining community as single men.⁵ A number of mining companies encouraged apprentices and Knappen to become owner-occupiers straight away, once again ensuring a direct transition from the sheltered atmosphere of the hostel to the binding environment of their own hearth and plot of land.⁶ The Hibernia company went even further along this road and in 1956 completed an experimental housing estate for 25 young owner-occupiers near by the youth village where they had formerly been accommodated.⁷ Youngsters who had saved for a house were rewarded with an

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33189, Hensel BWiM, Memo, 9.10.1951; HStAD NW41, 747, Sozialamt der evangelischen Kirche, 'Vorschläge zum Bau und zur Führung von Knappenheimen', 15.10.1951; Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.91.

² BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33189, BWiM, Memo, 9.10.1951.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33189, BWiM IIIA3 (Imhäuser) to Min Dgt. Classen, 30.5.1951.

⁴ Source Minutes of AAA meeting, 14.1.1959 and calculation from *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Heimstatthilfe im Lande NRW* (ed.), *Verzeichnis der Jugendheimstätten in NRW*.

⁵ Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.92.

⁶ Klinkert Papers, File 'Sammlung Vorstandssitzungen', Minutes of executive meeting of JHStW PV, 20.1.1956. Forstmann's comments; Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1956*, p.23ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*

extra loan from the company on top of the usual employer contribution.¹ This was a particularly striking example of the desire to maintain a protected environment and help the youngsters strike roots without ever immersing them in the life of the mining community.

Hostels, villages and their impact

Decisions about hostel location and the type of accommodation to be offered created only the raw bones of the hostel environment, the framework within which the newcomers could be monitored, controlled, counselled, influenced and educated. The framework itself could not determine the character of the social and spiritual environment within. Thus, before the hostels' impact can be understood and evaluated, it is vital to look in more detail at that environment. The following chapter, analyses the ideologies brought to bear on the occupants and the success of employers and other interested parties in guiding and communicating with the men and boys within their care.

¹ Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1957*, p.23.

Chapter 9: Fighting for their hearts and souls. Welfare, propaganda and miners' hostels, 1948-58

The emergence of a welfare policy

For a long time, the employers found it hard to get overly interested in the spiritual welfare of hostel occupants, be they adults or apprentices. Their low opinion of most of the newcomers within their charge, preoccupation with more fundamental issues and the general passivity in the face of Military Government actions all mitigated against a constructive welfare policy.¹ As late as October 1948, the Coal Control Group's welfare advisor found 'it hard to resist the impression that the DKBL are not really interested in welfare and only lend support when pressed from one side or the other and that most of the progress and development is due to outside organisations and individuals rather than to the DKBL'.²

As this comment suggests, the main initiatives in the early post-war period came from outside the mines. Ever since the early part of 1947, a number of organisations had begun to concern themselves with the new miners' well-being and to put pressure on the employers to take their responsibilities more seriously. Two of the most active and committed figures were British officers. Apart from Captain Elphick,³ there was also a more senior figure, the welfare officer of the UK/USCCG, C.S.Hudson, who went so far as to spend a week in a

¹ StaM Arbeitsamt Dortmund, 47, ABB, Minutes of conference in Buer on 28.10.1947, 7.11.1947.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS) BICO BISEC 11/104-2/2, US/UK CCG, Report to BICO for October 1948. See also BBA 8, 404, DKBL, Erhebung über Werksfürsorgeeinrichtungen im Steinkohlenbergbau, Stand Ende Feb. 1949, a questionnaire about the level of amenities and cultural services provided by the mines. Concordia's answers (entered directly on to the above questionnaire) reveal that at the beginning of 1949 the mine was still doing virtually nothing in this direction.

³ See chapter 8, p.395.

new miners' camp incognito in order to discover what life there was like.¹ At the beginning of 1948, Hudson argued that the main problem with the camps was no longer overcrowding but instead a shortage of entertainment and leisure amenities and suggested the creation of a joint employer-union organisation to look into new miners' welfare.² Hudson's idea was that by solving some of the new miners' difficulties and providing them with entertainment, wastage could be reduced and productivity increased.

At the same time both state and church were growing increasingly concerned about conditions in the camps. They were less worried about boosting coal production than hindering what they saw as the moral and political dangers of camp life. The NRW Social Ministry and Labour Administration were particularly concerned about the lack of supervision and guidance being offered the younger men, who were not being protected from alcoholism, sexual excess and possibly even political extremism.³ These anxieties were echoed by the churches. They had been involved in pastoral work in the miners' camps since 1946, at first purely on a parish by parish basis but fairly soon the work had become centrally directed and coordinated as a result of episcopal initiatives and the efforts of certain central church organisations such as the KAB and Caritas on the Catholic side and the CVJM and the Innere Mission for the Protestants. Many churchmen were unnerved by the 'eisige Kälte, die einem beim Betreten des Lagers entgegenschlägt..' as one priest put it,⁴ and felt this

¹ Hudson's German language was not so good that he could pretend to be a German national, but his true identity and rank remained concealed. HStAD NW42, 912, Paper, 'Besuch der Gutehoffnungshütte, Oberhausen, 12.-19.Dezember 1948', no date.

² HStAD NW42, 912, C.S.Hudson, 'Denkschrift über die Englandreise im Januar 1948', 19.1.1948; NW53, 492, Wheatley to Labour Minister, NRW, 3.1.1947[sic! It should be 1948].

³ IGBEA BR7, ABB to IVB, 28.4.1947; OBADA I6301/628/47, ABB, Circular to mine administrations, 17.3.1947; HStAD NW41, 746, Simons, 'Die Berglehrlingshime in NRW', 14.7.1947.

⁴ BM A101, 251, Pfarrer Tebroke to Dechant Niehues, Westerholt, 15.3.1947.

antagonism proved there to be a radical, anti-Christian spirit pervading the camps.¹

The union too began to wake up at central level to the needs of the new miners. The IVB encouraged camp and hostel occupants to set up committees and appoint representatives. From the end of 1947 onwards, the union organised conferences where grievances could be articulated and suggestions for improvements to camp life or union activity could be put forward.² Some union branches began to think about ways of offering entertainment and education to hostel inmates. In addition, both SPD and KPD intensified their efforts to mobilise support from new labour towards the end of 1947. Partly under cover of union activity, partly alongside it, the battle for support in the works councils was probably fiercer in 1947 than in any subsequent year.³

All these groups helped to stimulate employer interest in providing entertainment, education and cultural welfare policies for the camps. The British were able to exert pressure directly, and it was largely due to Hudson's urgings that spring 1948 saw the formation of the Kommission für soziale Aufgaben⁴ (KfSA), the primary function of which was to provide better services for the new miners.⁵ The state administration's ability to exert pressure was more indirect but no less effective, particularly when it came to the apprentices. The labour administration, for example, could and did deny those mines young

¹ BM A101, 251, Diözesanverband Katholische Arbeiterbewegung (KAB) to Kapitularvikar, 26.2.1947.

² See chapter 7, p.313ff.

³ ASD-FEST WW, 68, Minutes of the Ruhr mining conference on 31.8.1947 in Bochum, no date; N 25, vol. 1946-1948, SPD Bezirk Westl. Westfalen, Report on the works council elections in mining, 10.11.1947.

⁴ Initially, 'Kommission für Bergmannswohlfahrt'. On its first meeting, see WWA S22 (OMGUS) CO HIST BR 3/404-1/7, UK/US CCG, Report to BICO for March 1948.

⁵ Ges.Verb., File "K", vol.2 [The distinction between vol.1 and vol.2 has been introduced by the author as a means to distinguish between two files with the same name], Unsigned and undated paper, 'Vorgeschlagene Tagesordnung für die erste Sitzung des Bergarbeiter-Fürsorge-Ausschusses'.

labour which failed to provide adequate supervision. In addition, as state funding for apprentice hostels came in prospect, the mines were at pains to demonstrate the pedagogical and other services they performed.¹ Union activities, too, galvanised employers into action since they had no desire to leave the field open to works councils and the IGB and certainly not to SPD and KPD.²

Thus by the end of 1948, the employers were showing considerable interest in this area of policy.³ There was growing recognition of the value of good public relations and of ideological and cultural policy. 1948 was, for instance, the first year in which works' newspapers began to reappear.⁴ In September of that year, the DKBL created a small committee to look into ways of extending 'innerbetriebliche Werbung'⁵ and another example of the new awareness of public relations came in December 1948, when new miners received to take home with them on Christmas leave a little brochure about coal's achievements and value for the economy. This, the DKBL, hoped, would encourage the newcomers to return promptly to the mines when their official leave expired.⁶

Compulsive talking

Once the employers had begun trying to influence their 'charges', there was no stopping them. Over the following years, virtually no entertainment or service was offered the miners without it in some way carrying a moral or political

¹ See DKBL (ed.), *Die Berglehrlingsheimen des Steinkohlenbergbaus*.

² HStAD NW41, 747, Soz.Min. IIIB/6, Memo, 25.7.1948.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS) BICO BISEC 11/104-2/2, UK/US CCG, Report to BICO for December 1948.

⁴ Eg. *Der Förderturm*, works newspaper of the Gruppe Hamborn, GBAG. For a clear statement of the works' newspapers' intended function, see Alfons Neukirchen, 'Die Werkszeitschrift als Mittel betrieblicher Menschenführung', *BAG Ewald-König Ludwig*, December 1951, pp.14-16.

⁵ Ges.Verb. File 'Rundschreiben Werbung 1946-1949', General Director, DKBL, Circular No. V 102 to mining company directors, 15.9.1948.

⁶ Ges.Verb. File 'Rundschreiben Werbung 1946-1949', DKBL, Circular No. V 129 to mining companies and collieries, 9.12.1948.

message. Even when in reality all that was being provided was a little entertainment, the employers and other German groups involved were simply unable to concede that that was all they were doing. There was a compulsion to find a higher purpose, a deeper mission to everything that was done.

This was one of the most striking differences between the British and American attempts to help in the new miner programme and the Germans' approach. Captain Elphick's idea, for example, was quite simple - to provide some sort of room or meeting place with appropriate facilities and a little supervision so that the young miners could do what they wanted. If there was any 'higher' aim than providing entertainment, it was to give the youngsters a taste of democracy by letting them organise their own club.¹ And in similar vein, a British investigation of mining trainees conducted in 1947 concluded that, 'The trainees should not be nursed and cosseted but induced to do things for themselves.'²

The German proposals at the time have a completely different tone. They are full of anxieties and hopes, of the dangers of doing nothing and the high moral ideals towards which the youngsters must be led by wise elders. A small indicative example came at a meeting of the KfSA's sub-committee for entertainment. It was suggested that films might be provided at some of the hostels because the new miners often had no going-out clothes and many hostels were some distance away from the cinema.³ Immediately, it was then proposed that only culturally valuable films should be shown so as to raise the intellectual and spiritual level of the miners. And a further justification for showing the films was found - it would keep the newcomers away from

¹ OBADA I6303/1757/47, Copy, Elphick, 'Die Bedingungen junger Arbeiter in den Zechen. 2RCD u. 3RCD Bereich', 15.1.1947.

² PORO (ed.), *The mining trainee 1947*, p.30.

³ Ges.Verb. File 'I.II', Section 024,3, Minutes of 2nd meeting of Arbeitskreis II, 24.8.1948.

'abwegigen Vergnügungsrummeln' in the local towns.¹ This compulsion to have a mission, and the compulsion to guide rather than to let speak, seems to have been a fundamental characteristic of bourgeois culture in post-war Germany.

'Persönlichkeit' and 'Vermassung'

What were the values and ideas which the employers wished to convey? One pair of concepts that continually recurs in the discussions about welfare policy, particularly towards young trainees and apprentices, is 'Persönlichkeit' and 'Vermassung'. Here, for example, is Jürgen Heuer, writing about the work in the Pestalozzi villages:²

Daß über allem letztlich das Moment der Persönlichkeitsbildung steht, entspricht nicht nur der Notwendigkeit, bereits in der Jugend das Gefühl des Kollektivismus einzudämmen, sondern auch dem Ziel, dem werdenden Bergmann mit den ersten Ansätzen der Ausbildung ein festes Berufsethos zu vermitteln, das der Tradition des Bergmanns entspricht.

And here is an excerpt from a lecture on the subject of 'Ziele staatsbürgerlicher Willensbildung in der kulturellen Bergmannsbetreuung', given by an adult educationalist involved in cultural policy for miners:³

Es ist die Aufgabe des in der Bergmannsbetreuung wirkenden Dozenten in ständigem persönlichen Kontakt mit dem einzelnen Arbeiter zu stehen, um in einer Art säkularisierter Seelsorge möglichst unmittelbar an den Menschen, an den Personalkern des Individuums heranzukommen, so verursachend, dieses der Vermassung zu entreißen.

¹ Ibid.

² Jürgen Heuer, 'Pestalozzidorf - Sozialleistung des Bergbaus. Aufbau und Probleme, in H.J.Seraphim (ed.), *Stedlungen und Wohnungen von heute*, Münster 1952, pp.54-72, here p.62.

³ Precis of Dozent Sieburg, 'Ziele staatsbürgerlicher Willensbildung in der kulturellen Bergmannsbetreuung', in HStAD NW17, 141, RAG, Report on the conference in Kronenburg 21-26.9.1953, October 1953.

This antithesis, *Persönlichkeit*, or 'echte Persönlichkeit'¹ or 'Personalkern des Individuums',² on the one hand, and *Vermassung*³ or *Kollektivierung*⁴ on the other was so widespread that it can be seen as a sort of shorthand, which could be communicated and understood without the need for thought or explanation. Behind it lay an entire world view, part of which was peculiar to mining, or at least concentrated there, and part of which was characteristic of a lot of thinking in post-war Germany.

The erosion of authority and the danger of radicalism

The fundamental view behind the contrast between 'genuine personalities' and 'collectivisation', and the one that would have been understood anywhere in Germany, was as follows. The individual personality will hold true to certain values, if not swallowed up in mass society. The individual, in an organic society, has firm roots, a clear social picture and values. In mass society, the individual loses his roots and his 'intactness' and is swallowed up in emptier mass values. Unfortunately, many individuals are naturally drawn to the mass and therefore need protecting from it.

It is clear, though it was seldom said at the time, that the explanatory and emotional power of the concept 'Vermassung' stemmed from the way many middle class Germans had experienced fascism (or at least from the way they were trying, retrospectively, to order and reinterpret that experience). It is evident that their attitude towards the fascist era was to reject its 'excesses'

¹ 'Statt Kasernengeist die echte Persönlichkeit', *Rheinischer Merkur*, Koblenz, 5.2.1949.

² HStAD NW17, 141, lecture from Sieburg, 'Ziele staatsbürgerlicher Willensbildung in der kulturellen Bergmannsbetreuung' in report on the RAG conference at Kronenburg 21-26.9.1953.

³ SoFoStA File 'Dr.Jantke Sozialausschüsse der ev. Kirche 4.11.1951. 12', Pastor P.Arnold Dannenmann, *Das Jugendproblem heute*, Reprint of lecture given on 22.1.1952 in Essen, no date [1952].

⁴ Report on speech from Heinrich Kost, in HStAD NW41, 761, Senft, Tagungsbericht von der Ausbildungstagung im DKV-Haus, Essen, 15.1.1953.

which they interpreted as the excesses of a 'mass age' in which conventional values had disappeared. It was therefore not surprising that they saw young people as being the group most endangered by 'Vermassung'. The younger generation, having been most strongly influenced by the Nazi era, was the generation which had lost or never had a sense of an organic society and which had been and sometimes still was swept along by the enthusiasms and whims of the mass.

Apart from the Nazi influence, the other main source of danger was believed to be the uprooting caused by war and the events of the immediate post-war period. Here again the young were felt to be the most endangered group, having in many cases lost or been separated from their parents. In a draft paper for a conference of hostel wardens, the unstoppable Dr. Herwegen jotted down as key words on the situation of youngsters on post-war society 'Vernachlässigung, Verelendung, Gefährdung, Verwahrlosung, Kriminalität' but also, as a solution, 'Verwurzelung durch Heim und Beruf.'¹ Adult refugees too and other groups who had been swept away from their homeland or their former life by war and the consequences of war were believed to be vulnerable to the call of the mass. One of the field workers involved in cultural welfare policy observed that the refugees in the hostels had a high educational level but had lost a sense for genuine morality and ethics as a result of brutal wartime and post-war experiences.² Hostel occupants, who were away from home and lived in a mass, were seen as being particularly endangered.³ Since the miners' hostels were full of young, unattached former refugees, many of whom had lost parents as well as their homeland, it was not surprising that the new miner was often regarded as the

¹ HStAD NW41, 746, Dr. Herwegen, 'Entwurf für die Tagesordnung einer Heimleiter-Tagung', no date [1948/9].

² BBA 8, 191, Copy of report from Fischer, 'Alkohol in Bergarbeiterwohnheimen', 27.4.1950.

³ 'Vorschläge zum Bau und zur Führung von Berglehrlings- und Knappenheimen', *Mitteilungen der KfSA*, 1952, 1/2, p.3.

'Massenmensch' par excellence. In some guidelines produced by the Catholic church, seminary students were advised to spend several months working and living in the hostels, 'um den modernen Massenmenschen kennenzulernen'.¹

The danger was that radical organisations would exploit and intensify the negative consequences of this Vermassung. The 'personalities' of the youngsters needed rescuing not just from their past experiences but from the machinations of extremist organisations, above all from the KPD and the influences emanating from the GDR.²

Personality and occupation

Alongside this general feeling of the need to restore and protect the personality after the ravages of a mass age, there was a feeling, very strong in mining circles and clearly apparent in the quotation above from Heuer, that it is a feature of the modern age for the individual worker to lose his sense of self-worth and of the worth of his occupation. Job changing was seen as a sign of a lack of social roots, the absence of a rounded personality. In his guidelines for constructing and running hostels for Knappen, Klaus von Bismarck attributed wastage primarily not to material causes but to 'Verlust von Heimat und Besitz, Auflösung der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung und Bindung, das Versanden aller standesmäßigen Gruppierung, die allgemeine Ungeborgenheit in einer sachlich und unpersönlich gewordenen Welt'.³ It was therefore only logical that his guidelines had as their goal, 'den Menschen von heute aus seiner Vermassung zu lösen und ihm den Übergang zu organischen Lebensformen der Ehe, der Familie,

¹ BM A201, 47, Merkblatt für Theologen im Bergbau, no date.

² On the dangers ostensibly emanating from that quarter, see BBA 32, 267, Höcker to Premer, 3.6.1950.

³ HStAD NW41, 747, Sozial-Amt der evangelischen kirche, 'Vorschläge zum Bau und zur Führung von Knappenheimen', 15.10.1951.

der Siedlung auf eigenem Grund und Boden zu ermöglichen'.¹ The 'organic' way of life and the rounded personality would recreate the stability and ties which mass society had eroded.

Another churchman, this time the very influential Pastor Dannenmann, one of the leading figures in youth voluntary work in post-war Germany and a major voice in advising where and how Federal funds should be allocated, also saw job changing in these terms. In a speech to mining employers, Dannenmann talked of the wandering youngster, today mining coal in the Ruhr, tomorrow perhaps labouring in South Germany. Dannenmann argued that the fact that they did not stay in the best-paid jobs, by which he presumably meant mining, proved that it was a spiritual problem and not a material one. 'Es ist zuletzt die Frage nach dem Sinn des Lebens' and the problem was that the wanderers 'haben noch nicht aus der Vermassung herausgefunden'.² Strengthening the miners' personality, then, meant strengthening his sense of status, and rescuing the miners' 'estate' and an organic hierarchy from the fluid unsatisfying anonymity of mass society.

Strategy, hope and fear in the Ruhr

Of course, the frequent use of quasi-sociological language, like *Vermassung*, had its tactical purposes. The mines found it very useful to stress that they were not just trying to get workers for a job but were embarked on a high moral mission. That sort of thing went down well with the state. After a visit to the Ruhr in October 1952 by a Parliamentary Committee for youth welfare, the chairman reported to the Chancellor that they were very impressed by what they saw and above all 'von dem eindeutigen Bekenntnis des Herrn Generaldirektors Kost, daß

¹ Ibid.

² Dannenmann, *Das Jugendproblem heute*.

die Bergbauunternehmer nicht gewillt seien, bei der Übernahme der Berufsausbildungspflichten auf die erzieherischen und ethischen Werte des Christentums zu verzichten'.¹ Apparently the Chancellor himself was very pleased and promised to praise Kost at the appropriate opportunity.² 'Vermassung' was also a useful word to invoke when the danger that was really meant was that the left-wing would gain more influence. Warning of the dangers of 'Vermassung' was less partisan and less likely to offend the Social-Democrat and Christian-Democrat elements of the IGB than were statements about possible left wing radicalism.

But, as the previous remarks have suggested, it was much more than a tactical expression. The contrast between Vermassung und true personality expressed a powerful and optimistic vision. It suggested that if only the true personality of the miners could be restored and protected against levelling influences, mining could be transformed to what it once was. And similarly it evoked the hope that some stable social order could be resurrected, in which authority was recognised and respected and the different estates lived harmoniously alongside each other, each proud of its own specific contribution to the community.

Behind this optimism lay a considerable amount of anxiety. At one level there was the fear of the political radicalism that might result if the youngsters were to get into the wrong hands. 'Diese Arbeitslager', reported the head of the KAB within the diocese of Münster, 'werden immer mehr zu Brutstätten des Kommunismus. Die Tatsache, daß die Arbeiter dieser Lager bei den Betriebsratswahlen mitwählen, erklärt den hohen marxistischen Einfluß in

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 3306, Hensel to Ullrich, 23.10.1952.

² Ibid.

den Betriebsräten'.¹ Other priests made the same observation.² In 1951, the sociologist Curt Bondy presented his thoughts on welfare policy after visiting miners' hostels and, in a section of the paper underlined by Bondy, warned of the danger that the youngsters could become the followers of extreme left or right wing parties if not handled in the right way.³

At a deeper level, the notion that the young and the dispossessed needed guidance to return to the values and behaviour of an ordered society was a way of suppressing the anxiety that it was precisely the older generation and the established classes who had been compromised by fascism, whose values had been called into question and who could no longer provide convincing leadership for the young. An inner uncertainty was being turned outwards into a mission to rescue the 'uprooted' and transmit firm values. The employers, the churchmen and others were struggling to make something *within themselves* strong. As the Bochum director of apprentice education, Dr. Herwick, said in a talk about the moral and educational goals beyond the schools' narrower technical curriculum:⁴

Steins Worte waren unser Wegweiser: "Was wir an äußerem Ruhm verloren haben, müssen wir durch innere Werte wiedergewinnen". Unser Glaube stützte sich auf die Ewigkeitswerte der deutschen Seele, die nur verschüttet sein konnten, für die aber nach Goethes Wissen alle Länder und Meere zu klein sind, um ihren Reichtum zu fassen.

Barriers to communication

The opportunity and the urgent necessity of the post-war period was therefore to win the newcomers over from mass valuelessness, to revive and strengthen their

¹ BM A101, 251, Diözesanverband KAB to Kapitularvikar, 26.2.1947.

² BM A101, 251, various responses to a circular from the Kapitularvikar. See Pfarrer Clemens Kitten to Dechant (Buer), 12.3.1947; Pfarrer Terborke to Dechant Niehues, 15.3.1947.

³ HStAD NW41, 747, Curt Bondy, 'Gedanken zur außerbetrieblichen Beeinflussung von Bergbaulehrlingen, Knappen und jungen Neubergleuten', Hamburg, November 1951.

⁴ WBKA, Photocopied extract from *Mitteilungen der WBK* 1950, Nr.3, Vortrag des Bezirksschuldirektors Herwick, 'Unsere Bergberufsschule als Erziehungsschule'.

genuine personalities and thus to attain the twin goals of societal integration and occupational stability.¹

Most employers would have endorsed this view, but equally, most were aware of two major difficulties in implementing it. The first was money. Even in the best of circumstances, no colliery manager liked committing funds to such airy-fairy projects as cultural policy, lectures and hostel entertainment. There was never any shortage of mutterings about 'sozialer Klimbim'. In any case, the years after 1948 were far from being the best of circumstances. The mines were for a long period extremely hard-pressed for funds. Not only the accounts but also the Coal Control Group spoke against extravagance away from the immediate needs of production. When the DKBL tried to add a small amount on the coal price to provide steady funding for welfare policies, the UK/USCCG refused.² This made the mines reluctant to hire large numbers of additional personnel to offer services to the hostels.

Secondly, there was the problem of keeping out labour representatives. Under Control Council legislation, there was no doubt that works councillors had a right to codetermine this type of social policy.³ Particularly during the immediate post war years, employers did not feel strong enough to prevent works councillors from nominating hostel wardens. In addition, the DKBL was unwilling to antagonise the unions openly on social questions.⁴

¹ Bondy, 'Gedanken zur außerbetrieblichen Beeinflussung'.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS) CO HIST BR 3/404-1/7, Minutes of 18th meeting of UK/USCCG, 6.8.1948; interview with Siegfried Schroeder, 18.2.1984.

³ Control Council Law No.22, Works Council Law, reprinted in *Military Government Gazette for the British Zone*, 1946, 9, pp.197-199, esp. Article V (f).

⁴ For an example of the DKBL's caution, see BM A101, 251, DKBL to Bischöfl. Gen.vikariat, 29.4.1948. See also chapter 7, p.306ff.

Kulturkampf in the hostels

As far as the latter problem was concerned, it was the churches which offered a solution. It was no accident that it was a church organisation, in this case the Sozialamt, which had made the definitive general statement on building hostels.¹ For, the church played a crucial role in the hostel programme, providing personnel and assisting the employers to protect their apprentices both from too much contact with the local community and from union and works council influence.

The Catholics seem to have become aware of the apprentice hostels' specific importance in 1947 as a result of a Social Ministry conference to look into welfare policy for young miners. Present was Theodor Fennemann, director of what at that time was the only Catholic hostel for miners in the Ruhr. Fennemann was both alarmed and excited by what he heard and sent a letter to the Archbishop of Cologne and the Bishops of the other dioceses in the region.² What was alarming for Fennemann was the generally anticlerical atmosphere, emanating mainly from the union but not openly opposed by any of the other bodies present at the conference. No one seemed to be envisaging including Christian teaching or religious supervision amongst the proposed welfare measures and it was evident that the church was not to be given any major role. If the projected figures for apprentice recruitment were realised, wrote Fennemann, the implications could be disastrous. Unless the church organisations did something soon, there would be a strongly anticlerical atmosphere in the apprentice hostels and in fifteen years time this could well mean that the entire mining community was lost to the church. The good news for the church, however, was that both Social Ministry and Labour

¹ See chapter 8, pp.398-9.

² BM A101, 251, T.Fennemann, Director St. Johannesstift der Salesianer to Kardinal Frings et al, 12.7.1947.

Administration were privately well disposed to the idea of hostels being run under church supervision. This was an opportunity the church could not afford to miss.¹

This feeling that the apprentice hostels represented an opportunity to influence the character of the entire mining community was echoed by a number of church organisations over the following years. The Catholic Worker's Movement, for example, approved an attempt to found a Catholic hostel in Westerholt with the argument that the local mine was '90% red' and that the hostel was the only chance to break this Marxist stronghold.² The Caritas organisation and the CAJ were increasingly active in promoting the establishment of Catholic hostels, while similar initiatives emanated from the CVJM and the Innere Mission on the Protestant side.³ As the Caritas organisation argued in a pamphlet devoted to its new apprentice hostel in Bottrop, '...wer einen christlich ausgerichteten bergmännischen Nachwuchs hat, der hat später auch einen christlichen Bergmannsstand'.⁴ In 1950 the Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholische Heimstattbewegung für heimatlose Jugend im Lande NRW was formed to coordinate these initiatives for the Catholic side.⁵

During the period up to 1950/51, i.e., up to the beginning of the rapid hostel construction programme, NRW gave quiet but consistent support for church involvement in this area.⁶ Both social ministry and labour administration

¹ Ibid.

² BM A101,252, Winkelheide to Generalvikariat, 27.11.1948.

³ BM A101, 253, Paper, 'Die religiöse Situation und die seelsorgliche Betreuung in den Wohnheimen und Lagern des Industriegebiets', no date.

⁴ BM A101, 253, 'Caritas Berglehrlingsheim Bottrop. Ein Beitrag zum christlichen Nachwuchs des Bergmanns', [1949/ 1950].

⁵ BM A101,252, Paper, 'AG der kath. Heimstattbewegung in der Diözese Münster'. Duisburg no date.

⁶ At an important meeting in 1950, for instance, when the terms of the 5 million DM loan from the HAFSH were thrashed out, the Social Ministry made sure that church-run hostels could and would be recipients of funding. See HStAD NW41, 769, Minutes of interministerial meeting at the BWIM, 6.6.1950.

believed the churches were better qualified than employers to supervise the hostels. The employers were sometimes accused of not taking care and supervision seriously enough.¹ They lacked qualified personnel, particularly in the early years when most of the mines' employees formerly involved in youth and training work were disqualified by virtue of their Nazi party connections.² The state was also highly critical of the practice of allowing works councillors to nominate as hostel wardens men whose only qualification was that they were deserving social cases, often with some disability, rather than being pedagogically qualified.³

Initially the employers themselves were very cautious in their response to the church's initiative.⁴ Nevertheless it did not take the employers long to see that handing hostels over to the churches was the best way to keep union and works council at bay.⁵ At confidential meetings, influential employers gave the church to understand that their initiatives were very welcome if handled delicately enough.⁶ An early step was to establish a special camp at Adelheide, a former aerodrome, where homeless youngsters not yet ready for an apprenticeship could be prepared under church supervision.⁷ From 1950 onwards, the DKBL felt confident enough actively to promote the establishment of church-run hostels. Even where mines were not particularly disposed to involve the church, they were urged by the DKBL to do so. 'Ich brauche Ihnen gegenüber nicht zu betonen', wrote the DKBL's Lorenz Höcker to the director of

¹ HStAD NW41, 747, Minutes of meeting of committee 'Fürsorge für Jungbergleute und Berglehrlinge' (Elphick committee), 30.1.1948.

² 'DAF belastet' as Walter Niemann put it, see HStAD NW41, 761, Niemann to Weber 19.4.1949.

³ 'Jugend ohne innere Bindung. IV Industriehelme mit Komfort und ohne Seele', *Die Neue Zeitung*, 1952, No. 218, p.5.

⁴ BM A101, 251, DKBL to Bischöfl. Gen.vikariat, 29.4.1948.

⁵ HStAD NW41, 747, Soz.Min. NRW IIIB/6, Memo, 25.7.1948.

⁶ BM A101, 251, Julius Angerhauen to Bischof Michael Keller, 9.4.1948.

⁷ Ges.Verb File '003 Adelheide', Sogemeier to Kost, 9.6.1949; *Mitteilungen der KfSA* 1950,5, p.3.

the mine Emscher-Lippe, 'daß nach unserer Auffassung der christliche Geist überall, insbesondere aber in den Heimen ausstrahlen muß. Ist er doch letztlich die einzige Kraft gegenüber dem nicht nur im Osten herrschenden Ungeist!'.¹

As well as protecting the youngsters from unions and works councils and spreading a 'Christian spirit', whatever that was, the churches saved the employers money, in some cases because they were able to tap external sources of funding but more generally because in 1953 the IGB managed to extend the industry's wage norms to employees in colliery-run hostels. Church hostels were not covered by the agreement and their employees cost considerably less.

As an insight to employers' calculations it is interesting to consider the case of the Hibernia concern. In 1953, the director of the Caritas in Bottrop had very interesting news for the Bishop of Münster.² Dr.Köker from Hibernia had arranged a meeting to inform him of Hibernia's wish that control over its apprentice hostels be transferred to the church. Since Hibernia controlled some 20 percent of all apprentices in the industry this could not but be of interest to the church.³ According to Dr.Köker, Hibernia was having difficulty bringing up the youngsters in an appropriate way because the works council, unions and the youngsters themselves undermined the warden's best intentions. At the same time the union was insisting that the company pay wardens according to the industry's wage rates. The question for Hibernia was how to get the hostels into church hands when the powerful communist-led works council was opposed. Hibernia suggested that the church should 'pressure' the company into changing its hostel regime. 'Wir müssen uns darüber klar sein', said Dr. Köker, 'daß durch ein Klingelzeichen der Bischöfe von Münster und von Köln der gesamte

¹ BBA 35, 267, Höcker to Premer, 3.6.1950.

² BM A101, 253, Caritas-Verband Bottrop to Bischöfl. Gen.vikariat, 23.7.1953.

³ It was noteworthy that the Generalvikar did not waste a day in replying. At last the employers were having some reasonable thoughts on how to bring up their young miners, he wrote. BM A101, 253, Gen.vikar to Caritasdirektor Dr.Pelster, 24.7.1953.

Nachwuchs im Bergbau aus den katholischen Gegenden gesperrt werden könnte'.¹

These moves were, understandably, a source of considerable unease to the miners' union which felt the question of hostel regime to be one of fundamental importance.² When, in 1949, a DGB official wrote to the IGB to find out if it knew about the Adelheide project and to ask what it was doing to combat the Christian influence, the response was pessimistic. The IGB did not see what it could do to hinder the project and in general suffered from a lack of the pedagogically qualified personnel of which the church had a large reserve.³ However, the IGB tried where it could to prevent the church from becoming involved. In 1951, it felt the situation serious enough to send a circular to all works councillors warning them of Caritas and Innere Mission efforts. When the hostels were under church control, warned the IGB, union and works council lost the power to influence the youngsters. It attributed the employers' support for the church to a desire to undermine the union.⁴ A copy of the circular fell into the hands of the Caritas which passed it on to the Bishop of Münster with the commentary that the letter 'kennzeichnet in seiner ganzen Schärfe die Situation, in der wir augenblicklich stehen'.⁵ A quiet war developed with church representatives wooing the employers and union representatives trying to prevent the mines from putting their hostels in the churches' hands.

¹ BM A101, 253, Caritas-Verband für die Stadt Bottrop to Bischöfl.Gen.vikariat, 23.7.1953.

² IGBEA V6, IGB, Memo, 10.5.1954.

³ IGBEA File 'Jugend', August Enderle to August Schmidt, 12.5.1949; IGB Abteilung Schulung u. Bildung to Enderle, 1.6.1949.

⁴ IGBEA File 'Jugend', IGB Hauptverwaltung, Circular Nr.88/51 to works councils and social representatives, 23.7.1951.

⁵ BM A101, 252, B.v.Heyden to Gen.vikar, 3.8.1951.

In some cases, for example, in the Lothringen mine in 1952, the IGB was successful.¹ However it suffered a decisive disadvantage in that the state gave the churches a great deal of covert support. An official in the LAA Mining Office informed the diocese of Münster that funds could be diverted to enable Catholic hostels to be built; another official in the same administration offered to segregate incoming apprentices on confessional lines to facilitate the founding of Catholic hostels.² In October 1951, Hensel, one of the mining specialists in the Economics Ministry, sent a letter to the NRW Social Ministry's youth officer Willi Weber.³ In response to the above noted IGB circular, Hensel asked Weber if he could not get the religious organisations to show the absurdity of the union's accusations. In the same breath, however, he continued, 'Das christliche Element darf im Bergbau keinesfalls erstickt werden, besonders nicht bei der Bergbau-Jugend. Die letzte Bremse gegen die sowieso schon zu stark fortgeschrittene Radikalisierung wäre auf diese Weise beseitigt'.⁴

The danger was, wrote Hensel, that when the Codetermination Law came into operation, the labour directors would probably prevent the creation of further church hostels. Hensel asked Weber to use his influence so that pro-church labour directors were elected by the union. At the same time he proposed to his superiors in the Economics Ministry that the provision of funds for hostel construction be accelerated so that church influence could be extended as widely as possible before the Co-determination Law came into force.⁵

¹ IGBEA V3, IGB. Two internal memos from Abteilung VII to Geschäftsführenden Vorstand, both dated 17.6.1952.

² BM A101,252, Winkelheide to Gen.vikar, 27.11.1951; B. v.Heyden to Bischof Keller, 15.3.1951.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33189, Hensel to Weber, 13.10.1951.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. and BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33189, Hensel to Kattenstroth, 13.10.1951.

In view of the support for the churches, it is not surprising to discover that they made rapid headway. By the end of 1952, according to IGB calculations, some 108 apprentice and Knappen hostels had been completed. Of these 33, or just under a third, had been removed from colliery control. 13 were in the hands of Caritas, 15 run by the Innere Mission and 5 by other church organisations. Of the 30 hostels then under construction virtually half were church controlled, so that by 1954, the church would be in charge of between one third and two fifths of young miners' hostels.¹

Gradually the Codetermination Law began to affect the situation, as the labour directors were appointed and they extended their influence. But their impact was to confound the expectations of employers, church and union. For, because of the lower costs, the labour directors were very often well disposed to the church hostels. In other words they were keen not to have to pay the wardens according to the industry's general wage-rates because not doing so left them with more money to spend on other aspects of social services.² At the same time, however, the labour directors were able to insist on agreements that ensured union and works council free access. In the case of Hibernia, for example, the labour director and works council abandoned their opposition to church-run hostels once it appeared that a low-cost, pro-union solution was possible. The IGB, still opposed to the idea, found itself in the unhappy situation of opposing not only the employers, but the workers' representatives as well.³ Eventually, the union felt obliged to abandon its hard line against the church hostels, particularly since the church was feeling its way towards some sort of

¹ Calculated from figures in DGBA Protokoll-Sammlung, IGB, Hauptverwaltung, Abteilung Jugend (ed.), *Geschäftsbericht 1950-1952*, [Bochum 1953], p.87; and figures in IGBEA V6, IGB, Memo concerning transfer of hostels to outside organisations (Trägerverbände), 10.5.1954.

² IGBEA Handakten Rudi Quast, File 'Arbeitskreis-Arbeitsdirektoren 1952-1956', Meeting of Arbeitskreis der Arbeitsdirektoren, Bezirk Recklinghausen, 30.9.1953.

³ IGBEA V6, IGB, Memo concerning transfer of hostels to outside organisations (Trägerverbände), 10.5.1954.

an arrangement.¹ Thus although in hostels covered by existing agreements, the union sometimes continued to have problems of access,² new agreements with the church caused less concern. From the employer's viewpoint, they therefore offered less protection from the union than before and were probably inspired more by the desire to save money than by anything else. Still, it is a fact that the churches continued to extend their influence and by 1956, of the 187 Ruhr hostels for apprentices and Knappen only 119 were in the mines' hands, 31 being run by the Catholic organisation, 33 by Protestant groups and 4 by other independent organisations.³

Organising culture and entertainment

The involvement of the church in running apprentice hostels did not end the problem of who should provide services. In the first place, there was the question of adult hostels. It was not considered appropriate to place the adults wholly in the churches' hands, nor did the mines have the sort of hopes of the adult trainees that would have made their segregation from the mining community desirable. Nevertheless, the importance of transmitting the right message here too was undisputed. Secondly, there were the many apprentice hostels which remained in mines' hands and needed attention and, finally, even the church-run hostels were not always self-sufficient when it came to providing entertainment and education.

Though they gave the church discrete encouragement (during 1949, there were monthly confidential meetings between representatives of the DKBL and the

¹ Ibid.

² IGB Bezirksleitung Essen (ed.), *Geschäftsbericht 1954/1955*, p.117; IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1956*, p.252.

³ This included Jugenddörfer but excluding 'Jungarbeiterhelme' for miners over 18 other than Knappen. Calculated from *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Heimstatthilfe im Lande NRW* (ed.), *Verzeichnis der Jugendheimstätten in NRW*.

church organisations involved in adult camp and hostel welfare policies),¹ the employers were reluctant to allow the churches to hold meetings in their own hostels, because of the danger that this would give other political groups *carte blanche* to organise events there and would antagonise the IGB. The DKBL did manage, at first experimentally, then as a permanent fixture, to include religious instruction as part of the curriculum at the apprentice training schools, albeit at a cost of allowing the unions to hold some lectures too. But, sympathetic as it was, the DKBL did not want to take the risk of giving church organisations free access to mine-owned hostels. The union leadership too was agreeable to a general prohibition on 'political' meetings (under which heading it included the church) in the hostels² because this would keep not only the church but also the KPD youth groups at bay.

The question, therefore, was who should provide the hostels with entertainment. The state stepped in the breach, and at the beginning of 1949, negotiations between the DKBL and the Ministry for Education and Culture led to the creation of a Fachstelle für Bergarbeiterbetreuung, run by the regional association for adult education (Landesverband der Volkshochschulen). The Fachstelle was wound up in 1949 and replaced by the Revierarbeitsgemeinschaft für die kulturelle Bergarbeiterbetreuung (RAG), an organisation that persists till this day.³ Five field workers were appointed to stimulate and coordinate cultural activities in the miners' hostels. The sums invested were not large, but the RAG in conjunction with local wardens and Volkshochschulen did organise a considerable number of events.⁴

¹ BM A101, 252, Kath. Lagerwerk to Bishop of Münster, 10.6.1949.

² Ges.Verb., File "K", vol.2', Minutes of KfSA meeting, 16.11.1950.

³ HStAD NW17, 136, Landesverband der Volkshochschulen NRW, Circular to members of the Landesverband, 10.1.1950.

⁴ See Egon Dietzel, 'Kulturelle Bergmannsbetreuung, eine Notwendigkeit. Gedanken zur kulturellen Bergmannsbetreuung der Volkshochschule Bochum', *Der Anschnitt*, 1954, 6, 2, pp.20-21.

Conveying the true ethos of the miner

Turning to the actual practical work of providing services for the new miners, the first obvious feature is that a lot of energy was expended trying to increase their pride and interest in mining. Both church and state recognised the priority of strengthening 'Berufsstolz' through suitable lectures.¹ There was a widespread hope that, if the right spiritual guidance were given, it would be possible to convey to the newcomers a specific mining mentality, as Jürgen Heuer wrote in his account of the Pestalozzi villages:²

Hier ist es erforderlich...ein Gefühl für die Mentalität des Bergmanns zu erwecken. Die Vermittlung eines echten Traditionsbewußtseins in Verbindung mit einem fundierten Berufsstolz und Standesbewußtsein, das das Ansehen des Bergmanns hochhält, ist hier eine der wesentlichen psychologischen Aufgaben, die vor allem den Pflegeeltern des Pestalozzidorfs obliegt.

Or as Curt Bondy put it, a new 'Standesbewußtsein' was to be created through 'außerbetriebliche Beeinflussung'.³

At a celebration to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the mining company Concordia, two short musical recitals were followed by three poems; first came the miner with long service behind him and then a new miner, who recited the following:⁴

Die Werksgemeinschaft schließt mit unsichtbaren Bänden
Zusammen all, die sich hier zusammenfanden
Sie webt um Lehrling, Knappen, Hauer, Veteranen
Und um uns Nebergleute, die von weither kamen,
Um Arbeit und auch Heimat hier zu finden
Und altem Stamm uns glücklich zu verbinden.

An even more theatrical attempt to emphasise this continuity with the past and to celebrate the steadfastness of the miner was a ceremony at the Dirgardt-

¹ HStAD NW41, 746, Copy, Caritasverband Bottrop, Berglehrlingsheim Erziehungsgrundsätze, Bottrop, 21.10.1948; Curt Bondy, 'Gedanken zur außerbetrieblichen Beeinflussung'.

² Heuer, 'Pestalozzidorf', p.62.

³ Bondy, 'Gedanken zur außerbetrieblichen Beeinflussung'.

⁴ BBA 8, 191, 'Festfolge. Felerstunde der Concordia BAG Oberhausen Rhld'. September 1950.

Mevissen mine. The 250,000th newcomer to be found a job in the Ruhr was symbolically presented with the miner's tools by the oldest miner in the pit. The celebration was attended by the 50,000th newcomer, the 100,000th and so on as well as a mining family of grandfather, father, son and son-in-law, all of whom worked at the mine Hugo.¹

There were countless other attempts to cultivate a sense of tradition and the miners' mentality. In 1948, for example, the GBAG Gruppe Hamborn publication, *Der Förderturm*, offered a piece on the nature and soul of the miner, accompanied by a poem about the farmer and miner as two kindred souls working hand in hand.² Issues in 1949 saw further pieces on old mining traditions and practices.³ A major paper on cultural policy, produced for the KfSA in 1952, suggested going beyond the new miners and trying to persuade the whole workforce of mining's inner value. 'Was der Bergmann früher einmal gewesen ist: auf dem Wege über das Erlebnis kulturellen Lebens und seinen Anteil daran wird er sich wieder finden'.⁴ By and large, however, it was the hostel residents who remained the chief objects of cultural welfare policy.

Apart from communicating a sense of mining's inner worth and tradition, there were also various attempts to convey the notion that occupational loyalty was a sign of personal strength. *Der Förderturm*, for example, offered its readers an article of high moral tone, 'Wer besitzt Bildung'. It stressed that genuine personality was more important than any school-book education and lamented the absence of the harmoniously balanced personality, full of occupational

¹ 'Sechs Jahre Außenstelle Bergbau', p.79.

² See 'Von Art und Seele des Bergmanns', *Der Förderturm*, July 1948.

³ See, for instance, 'Schöpferisches Bergmannstum. 3. Das bergmännische Erzählgut', *Der Förderturm*, June 1948; 'Der Bergbau der Vorzeit', *Ibid.*, August 1948; 'Die Bergmannssprache', *Ibid.*, October 1948; 'Gute alte Bergmannsart', *Ibid.*, October 1949.

⁴ HStAD NW41, 747, Dr. Hoerneck, Wiesbaden, 'Gedanken zur kulturellen Bergmannsbetreuung im Steinkohlenbergbau', (Gutachten für die KfSA), 15.5.1952.

ethos and integrity.¹ The view that occupational loyalty was the sign of a balanced personality, and could be inculcated as such, is also apparent in the criteria for choosing the village 'parents' laid down by the JhStW PV. The second in the list of criteria, was 'Bodenständigkeit und Heimatverbundenheit',² the implication being that this could be transmitted to the youngsters by the force of the house parents' personality.

Of course, not all the attempts to encourage integration were in this romantic-historical mould. A glance through the RAG's standard lecture topics in 1953 shows a large number of more straight-forward subjects: 'Was kann ich dazu beitragen, um in meinem Beruf zu bleiben und vorwärtszukommen', 'Welche Bildungsmöglichkeiten und welches Verhalten erleichtern dem Neubergmann die Eingewöhnung in die neue Heimat', and so on, though the programme was not without lectures on the history of mining and the mentality of the miner.³

'Man bestimmt sich wieder'

Alongside these aspirations and often in conflict with the goal of integration into the local environment, was the desire to restore a lost moral order, to recreate proper behaviour and a respect for authority. The pressure to detach the hostels from the mining community has already revealed just how strong this desire was.⁴ No programme for cultural welfare was complete without a reference to reviving an 'aktive christliche Gesinnung',⁵ to the 'erzieherischen

¹ 'Wer besitzt Bildung', *Der Förderturm*, June 1948.

² JHStW PV (ed.), *Pestalozzieltern im Pestalozzidorf*, Essen 1952, cited in Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidorfer', p.27ff.

³ Ges.Verb., File 'Unternehmensverband 662-668', Tätigkeitsbericht der RAG 1953.

⁴ See chapter 8, p.398ff.

⁵ Klinkert Papers, File 'Niederschriften der Arbeitstagungen und Vortragsveranstaltungen', Vormbrock, 'Überblick über die bisherige Arbeit des Jugendheimstättenwerks und den Entwicklungsstand der Pestalozzidorfer', 7.10.1953.

und ethischen Werte des Christentums',¹ or the values of 'der auf christlicher Grundlage beruhenden abendländischen Kultur'.²

Exactly what was meant by Christian values was never specified but the value on which greatest emphasis was placed was undoubtedly respect for authority. At the very top of the Pestalozzi Association's criteria for selecting village parents was a decent moral outlook (*Anständigkeit der Gesinnung*), elaborated as a sense of duty and of responsibility.³ 'Gegen Unbescheidenheit, Mangel an Ehrfurcht, Ablehnung jeglicher Autorität anzugehen, benutze ich jede Gelegenheit, jede Aussprache', reported one of the field workers in cultural welfare.⁴

Controlling sexual behaviour was another priority and many hostels instituted dance classes as a way of regulating how young men and women came together.⁵

There was a discussion in 1953 about whether youngsters should be allowed to take their girlfriends on trips. Yes, was the answer, because the young miner then has:⁶

einen gesunden Ehrgeiz, den anderen gegenüber mit diesem Mädels bestehen zu können; danach wird er sich seine Gefährtin aussuchen und wird sich selbst entsprechend benehmen. Das sind Dinge, die zu erreichen die kulturelle Bergmannsbetreuung als einen ihrer Programmpunkte betrachtet.

Suitable lectures were also offered to influence the youngsters' choice of partner, on 'Gesunde und ungesunde Frauenschönheit', for example, which presumably

¹ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 3306, Hensel to Ullrich, 23.10.1952.

² 'Pestalozzidörfer des Bergbaus', p.17; Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.26.

³ JHStW PV (ed.), *Pestalozzieltern im Pestalozzidorf*, in Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.27ff.

⁴ HStAD NW17, 10, Erich Burrisch to Kultusmin., 2.12.1949, annex.

⁵ Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.84; BBA 32, 1186, 'Shamrock Berglehrlinge widmen sich begeistert dem Tango nach der Schicht', clipping from *Westfälische Rundschau*.

⁶ HStAD NW17, 141, Lecture from Fischer in report on the RAG conference at Kronenburg 21-26.9.1953.

warned the young miners against flashy girls wearing too much make-up.¹ The hostel wardens were instructed how to help prevent premature sex and masturbation.² General social behaviour too, needed improving, and fitting lectures with titles such as 'Man benimmt sich wieder' were given to meet this need.³

These 'secondary virtues' had become the symbols of the struggle to preserve or revive a past moral order. Two examples will suffice to show the strength of the anxieties that were aroused here. In a lecture given in 1954, Erwin Jochum talked about the way in which the apprentice schools could help to shape apprentices' sexual behaviour. He described some of the shocking cases that had come to his attention, the worst being two young miners who, invited to spend the night at the house of a widow, slept with her two daughters after having drawn straws to see who slept with whom. Leaving aside the fact that the story in the form in which it is presented seems rather apocryphal, it is noteworthy that Jochum went on to say:⁴

Da öffnet sich ein Abgrund, der uns mit Ekel und Grauen erfüllen muß. Doch das ist die Situation unserer Tage...das ist das unheimlich glimmende Feuer unter der Oberfläche, das sich zu einer verheerenden Feuersbrunst ausweiten kann.

Less apocalyptic, but no less striking was a paper delivered in the previous year at a conference for field workers and other interested participants in cultural welfare policy. Without embarrassment, but with an emotion that comes

¹ HStAD NW17, 10, Report on cultural events in the hostels of mine Lohberg during January 1950.

² HStAD NW42, 912, Simons, Bericht über den Lehrgang für Heimleiter von Berglehrlingen- und Ledigenheimen vom 6.10.1947, 18.1.1948.

³ Lecture from Fischer in HStAD NW17, 141, RAG, Report on the conference in Kronenburg 21-26.9.1953, October 1953.

⁴ Erwin Jochum, 'Das sexuelle Problem unserer heutigen Jugend und der Beitrag der Bergberufsschule zu seiner Lösung', *Mitteilungen für die Bergberufsschulen*, 1954, 6, here p.10.

through clearly in the text, Dozent Fischer had this to say about the cultural value of organised outings with young miners:¹

Es wird so oft gesagt, daß die jungen Menschen keinen Sinn mehr für ethische Werte hätten. Diese Auffassung entspricht nicht ganz den Tatsachen. Es ist immer wieder ein Erlebnis, festzustellen, wie diese Menschen im Dom still und ruhig werden und sogar die Hände falten. Das allein könnte schon die Berechtigung der Betreuungsarbeit unterstreichen.

There is a sort of shuddery feeling of pleasure here at that little physical gesture of bourgeois propriety. The decently held hands, though in reality indicating nothing more than that their owners were intimidated by the atmosphere of a large cathedral and uncertain as to how to behave, symbolise for the speaker an acceptance of proper values. The values themselves remain undefined. Such gestures - decent behaviour, respectful demeanour and so on - become the focal point of cultural policy, because of the difficulty in actually specifying what the deeper values might be.

One other element of moral education was the fight against alcoholism. Though there was no doubt that alcohol intake in many of the hostels was high, this aspect of moral education too reveals as much about the anxieties and high moral hopes of its propagators as it does about the actual social problems on the ground. The most active organisations in this field were the Deutsche Hauptstelle für die Bekämpfung der Suchtgefahren (DHS), a long established body with an ignominious history in the 1933-45 period, and the Hoheneck group within the Catholic church. In 1948, the DHS unsuccessfully applied for a general ban on the sale of alcohol in camps.² Together with a body calling itself the Sozialhygienischer Volksdienst it produced a brochure called 'Jungbergmann --Moment mal!', warning of the dangers of addiction and

¹ HStAD NW17, 141, lecture from Fischer in report on the RAG conference at Kronenburg 21-26.9.1953.

² HStAD NW41, 761, DHS to Ministerpräsident, 20.12.1948.

stressing the advantages of an upright life. Purporting to come from 'Euer alter Schießmeister Otto', the brochure went through the usual litany of warning against films of doubtful quality and offered two photos on how and how not to spend one's leisure time. While the 'how not to' photo depicts a mixed group rather the worse for drink and cheerfully toasting the photo-taker with their Schnapps bottles, the contrasting picture offers a group of clean faced and sporty apprentices standing around quietly with some decently dressed local girls.¹ Modesty, decency and restraint were the watch-words here. To intensify its campaign, the DHS set up a special office in Bochum,² but seems to have undertaken little more than lecture tours. A request for financial support in 1951 apparently brought little response from the DKBL.³ Unfortunately the records of the office have been destroyed so that it is difficult to say much about the office's subsequent activities.

'German music or jazz?'

As well as integrating the newcomers into the moral order, the cultural policy makers also felt the need to communicate a genuine aesthetic. Lecture topics and works newspaper articles such as 'Schöne Welt', 'Gesunde und ungesunde Frauenschönheit', 'Deutsche Musik oder Jazz' and so on were meant to lead the youngsters to an appreciation of true culture.⁴ There was a sense of returning - or attempting to return - to a valid, German aesthetic. In a 1950 article on

¹ HStaD NW41, 761, 'Jungbergmann Moment mall', no date [1951?].

² See HStaD NW41, 747, 'Ruf ins Volk'. *Monatsschrift für Volksgesundheit*, 1950, 3, Nr.6.

³ HStaD NW17, 136, DHS to DKBL, 20.1.1951.

⁴ HStaD NW17, 10, Städtische VHS Bochum, Dozent für kulturelle Bergmannsbetreuung, Bericht, 1.5.1950; NW17, 10, 'Rückschau auf die Kulturveranstaltungen die in den Heimen der Zeche Lohberg im Januar 1950 durchgeführt wurden'; *Mitteilungen der KJSA* 1949, 4, p.4.

cultural activities in the hostels and mining community, *Der Förderturm* praised a recent concert of much loved tunes:¹

Herz und Gemüt schwingen mit in jenen frohen Kindheits- und Heimats-
erinnerungen, die in der Unrast der Kriegs- und Nachkriegsjahre, nicht
zuletzt aber auch in den Jazz- und Negerrhythmen der Neuzeit, völlig zu
ersticken drohten.

The Pestalozzi association saw one of their missions in leading youngsters out
of the contemporary mass culture and back to the true and beautiful cultural
works of the German people.²

Many hoped that not only the newcomers but also the established miners could
be drawn into the wider community through appreciation of the classics of
national culture. Cultural policy, wrote a Dr.Hoernecke in a paper
commissioned by the KfSA:³

will den Bergleuten in ihrer Gesamtheit, nicht nur den Neubergleuten,
durch den Anteil an den Kulturgütern, die sie ihnen vermittelt, und in
denen sie heimisch macht, das Bewußtsein geben, ob mit oder ohne
Wohnung, ein vollwertiges und gleichberechtigtes Glied der Gesellschaft
zu werden, in der sie leben.

An experiment in exposing the whole workforce to improving cultural events
had in fact been underway at the GHH mines since 1949.⁴ This was also the goal
of another organisation, the Association of Friends of Art and Culture in
Mining. One of its members wrote of the need to assist the miners in aesthetic
judgements about furnishing their house. His article is worth quoting at length
because of the way many of the motifs and anxieties we have observed elsewhere
are brought together here. After stressing the need for caution and subtlety in

¹ 'Gesang und Instrumentalmusik im Rahmen der kulturellen Bergmanns-
betreuung', *Der Förderturm*, March 1950.

² Vormbrock, 'Überblick über die bisherige Arbeit'.

³ HStAD NW41, 747, Dr.Hoernecke, Wiesbaden, Gedanken zur kulturellen
Bergmannsbetreuung im Steinkohlenbergbau, 15.5.1952.

⁴ Ges.Verb. File "K" vol.2', Minutes of the 7th meeting of KfSA, 11.11.1948; File
'III.IV', meeting of Arbeitskreis III, 24.9.1952.

approaching what was after all part of the miners' private family life. Winkelmann outlined what was wrong with the miners' choice of furniture:¹

Die riesigen, schwellenden, Unruhe ausstrahlenden Küchenbuffets, die schweren protzigen Betten und Frisierkommoden, kurz all das was wir heute als "Gelsenkirchener Barock" bezeichnen, ist in Wahrheit den inneren, geraden, einfachen Werten des Bergmanns fremd... Gerade weil wir mit der Frage der Wohnkultur zur persönlichsten Sphäre unserer Bergleute, ins Familienleben, in das Innenleben vorstoßen, gerade darum ergibt sich hier für uns eine Aufgabe grundsätzlicher Bedeutung. Die Erziehung zu echtem Formgefühl, zu einem Gefühl für abgewogene Verhältnisse zwischen Raum und Einrichtung, die Hinwendung zu echten Formen und Farben sind Voraussetzungen für das Wachsen einer neuen Wohnkultur, die unserem innersten Wesen, unserer augenblicklichen Situation und unserem Bedürfnis nach Wahrhaftigkeit entspricht.

On the one hand there was the idea of returning to purer and simpler forms, an idea which evoked the myth of the miner of the past, a genuine and simple figure who knew his place and did not aspire to anything else. On the other there was a clear anxiety towards the kind of statement that the 'Gelsenkirchen Baroque' style was making. The robust, pompous showiness that characterised a lot of miners' furniture at that time, was anathema to a nervous bourgeoisie anxious to restore restraint, modesty and propriety. In effect, two sorts of anxiety were in collision: the bourgeoisie's general unease made it recoil from this type of showiness, while the miners' social insecurity inspired them to exhibit it - that, at any rate, was how the Dortmund sociologists explained the miners' persistence with 'Gelsenkirchen Baroque' even in the smaller housing of the post-war period.²

Democracy: a nation of dutiful and responsible citizens

A lot of the guidance on moral and aesthetic questions had a political element, in that it aimed to remove a 'proletarian' consciousness and life-style. Beyond this type of indirect propaganda, there was a good deal of explicit political

¹ Heinrich Winkelmann, 'Helm und Herd und Sport und Spiel des Bergmanns', *Westdeutsche Wirtschafts-Monographie* Part 1, 'Steinkohle Ausgabe', April 1953.

² SoFoSt, 'Schlußbericht', pp.35-36.

education. There was a general consensus that the new miners should be educated to be good democrats.¹ The stress, however, was on the duties and responsibilities of the citizen, rather on his freedom or participation. As Herwick, the director of apprentice education, declared: 'Wir hoffen...Menschen zu formen, die sich später schämen in der Straßenbahn zu sagen: "Das ist demokratische Freiheit, jeder kann machen was er will"'.² There was a strong emphasis on the need for a moral reawakening or a moral rearmament.³ There was also frequent stress on the need for European unity, on European integration as the ultimate aim of politics.⁴

In terms of the approach to the miners, the older generation's anxiety, natural authoritarianism and burning sense of mission all tended to preclude much practical democracy. Again this was a striking contrast between the British initiatives and those of their German counterparts. Consider the closing words of the British survey of trainees in 1947:⁵

Finally, there is presented here a golden opportunity to introduce democratic practices. The trainees should not be nursed and cosseted but induced to do things for themselves. It might be recommended to the trainees in each camp that they set up a social committee. A house committee is also indicated, to decide upon those day to day matters and questions of conduct and discipline which fall outside the general supervisory functions of the pit management or camp leader. Such a committee could also act as the representative voice of the trainees in dealing with the management of the pit or with outside bodies. A seat on the Works' Council should be reserved for a representative elected by this committee.

In German hands, by contrast, instruction and moral education was often realised in a very authoritarian manner, particularly in relation to the young apprentices. There was a general feeling that the uprooted young needed to be

¹ Sieburg, 'Staatsbürgerliche Willensbildung in der Bergmannsbetreuung'.

² Herwick, 'Unsere Bergberufsschule'.

³ HStAD NW17,10 Städtische VHS Bochum Dozent f. kulturellen Bergarbeiterbetreuung, Bericht, 1.5.1950; Erich Bürisch to Kultusminister, 2.12.1949.

⁴ Sieburg, 'Staatsbürgerliche Willensbildung in der Bergmannsbetreuung'.

⁵ PORO (ed.), *The mining trainee 1947*, p.30.

brought up within a firm and a religious environment.¹ They had been deprived too long of the 'streng, richtungsweisende väterliche Hand'.² The hostel rules produced by the Caritas in Bottrop reveal this particularly clearly.³ Beginning with the menacing greeting, 'Unser Heim soll Dein "Zuhause" sein. Du sollst Dich hier wohlfühlen', it goes on to tell the youngster when to get up, how to wash and in what state the room must be left. No matter what the weather, the windows must be opened on awakening - 'Wir sind alle Freunde der frischen Morgenluft'. Only on two weekdays and Sundays did the youngsters have free use of their leisure time. (Needless to say, church going was compulsory). The youngsters were trained to sing grace at mealtimes in canon.⁴ But outside the hostels, even local-born youngsters experienced a new religious-authoritarian spirit in their schools.⁵ Indeed, it pervaded the way mining employers brought up their own children, as the memoirs of mining engineer Rudolf Wawersik make clear.⁶

Free discussions were difficult and often unrewarding because so many areas were taboo. This applied particularly to the state-sponsored activities because of the state's strong desire to appear politically and religiously neutral. Both Volkshochschulen and NRW ministries felt their work could not be effective if

¹ Bondy, 'Gedanken zur außerbetrieblichen Beeinflussung'.

² Jochum, 'Das sexuelle Problem', p.8.

³ HStad NW41, 746, Caritasverband Bottrop, Berglehrlingsheim Hausordnung, 21.10.1948.

⁴ Ibid. and 'Statt Kasernengeist die echte Persönlichkeit', *Rheinischer Merkur*, 5.2.1949.

⁵ Hans Diether Baroth, *Aber es waren schöne Zeiten*. Munich 1982, p.58. 'Nachdem einige Monate ins Land gegangen waren, bekamen wir eine Lehrerin. Sie war streng und katholisch, hager, spartanisch, fast lebensfeindlich. Irgendwie eine magere graue Maus, mit viel Lust für Prügel. Sie führte das neue Eröffnungsritual zu Unterrichtsbeginn ein: das Morgengebet...'

⁶ Rudolf Wawersik, *Ausbeute eines Bergmannslebens. Erinnerungen an den oberschlesischen, saarländischen und westfälischen Bergbau*, Essen 1981. In a speech addressed to his son at confirmation, Wawersik told him 'Du wirst im Lebenskampf aber nur dann Erfolg haben, wenn Du unermüdlichen Fleiß übst und stets vom Pflichtbewußtsein erfüllt bist' and 'Die am meisten dem Göttlichen dienen, sind auch im Kampfe voran', p.131.

their neutrality was placed in jeopardy.¹ If this neutrality were not seen to be preserved, the speakers would lose credibility and there was a danger of losing the youngsters or driving them to extremes. Thus lectures tended to concentrate on formal issues. As a speaker at a conference for hostel wardens said, a good topic was not 'socialism or capitalism' but 'the refugee and equal rights', 'I read a constitution', and 'what is politics and is it necessary'.² Religious questions too were evidently seen as dangerous if they dragged the lecturers into any area that could be considered denominational. At a conference on cultural policy in 1953, the question was raised whether religious issues should be discussed. Yes, was the answer, and the fieldworkers must be in a position, 'die oft sehr prekären Fragen zu beantworten'.³ Again, there was a strong sense of danger here if the tightrope of 'neutrality' was left.

Finally, of course there were inner uncertainties that made any discussion dangerous. 'Wo ist seelisch im deutschen Volk das Geschehen der letzten 20 Jahre wirklich verarbeitet worden?', asked Oberkirchenrat Kloppenburg, in a lecture to mining educationalists whose refreshing openness contrasted strongly with so much that was said after the war.⁴ 'Wie sollen wir', continued the speaker, 'wenn wir selber in Hysterie geraten bei der Diskussion über diese Dinge, erwarten, daß eine Jugend gesund reagiert?'⁵

If the Nazi era was mentioned at all, it rushed through discussion under the euphemism of 'jüngste Vergangenheit'. This same inner uncertainty made discussion of many contemporary issues also very rigid. In a revealing phrase

¹ HStAD NW17, 136, Kultusministerium NRW IIE5, Internal memo to Minister Teusch, 8.11.1950.

² HStAD NW42, 912, Simons, Report on a course for wardens of hostels for apprentices and young miners, 6-10.10.1947, 18.1.1948.

³ HStAD NW17, 141, RAG, Report on the conference in Kronenburg 21-26.9.1953, October 1953.

⁴ Kloppenburg 'Jugend in Beruf und Freizeit', *Mitteilungen für die Bergberufsschulen der WBK* 1957, 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*

in his dissertation about the Pestalozzi villages, Roelen observed that religious groups had been set up in a number of villages where the youngsters could discuss religious issues and 'eliminate religious doubts'.¹ There was no room for doubt. This fear of admitting uncertainty or embarking on contentious issues gave a lot of the political and religious messages a rather sterile quality.

It should be noted, however, that, because of the rather formalistic approach to democracy, when democratic experiments *were* made, they were made on a thorough and institutional basis. For instance when the CVJM set up special hostels known as 'Guilds' to help the young migrants who streamed in from the GDR in the mid-1950's find their feet, they contained special courts and parliaments to give the youngsters a taste of democracy.² Some of the Pestalozzi villages had youth parliaments to allow the youngsters decide how to spend their leisure time.³ When the Ewald-König Ludwig mining company organised a skiing trip for its youngsters, they too formed their own parliament and shaped their time according to popular vote.⁴ And there were a number of other similar examples.

The IGB on the road to a classless society

How did the union respond the general tenor of the cultural work and to what extent was the union able to offer a different line? In 1949, when state-sponsored cultural work began, the IGB was uneasy about it, fearing that the approach would be hostile to the union.⁵ In Bochum, the district organisation

¹ Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.77.

² 'Heimatlose haben wieder ein Zuhause', *Ruhr Nachrichten*, 7.1.1956; 'Im Gildenhause gilt keine D-Mark', *WAZ*, 27.1.1956.

³ Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.89.

⁴ 'Schi-Freizeit unserer Berglehrlinge in Willingen', *BAG Ewald-König Ludwig*, Feb/March 1950, pp.15-18.

⁵ DGBA File 'IGB Monatsberichte 1949', IGB, Report for April 1949, Bochum district.

there contested the local field worker's right to hold political lectures, saying this was the union prerogative.¹ However this suspicion was short lived and the Bochum district's annual report for 1950, for example, praised the VHS work.² The big difference between the union and the rest of the workers in the cultural welfare field, was that the IGB was hostile to any attempts to segregate the newcomers from the rest of the workforce. It grew increasingly critical of such things as separate sport or other activities for hostel occupants which prevented the inmates from seeking more links with the local community. There is little doubt that the union's own efforts were concentrated far more on building bridges between newcomers and locals than creating a new ethos in the hostels.³

Nevertheless, there was a surprising degree of common ground between the IGB and the other groups involved in cultural policy. For one thing, the IGB was, understandably, committed to party-political neutrality.⁴ This was, after all, the keystone of the new post-war unity within the labour movement. Another point of common ground was that top IGB officials were at least as hostile as their bourgeois counterparts to giving the youngsters a taste of democracy. At the first youth conference, Walter Maibaum, the union's youth secretary said that the union's goal was 'pflichtbewußte junge Menschen zu erziehen' who would be the citizens of tomorrow and convinced democrats. The emphasis was on educating them to be aware of their duties, before giving them a taste of

¹ HStAD NW17, 140, Steinmeyer, Report, 14.11.1949.

² IGB Bezirk IV (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1950*, p.14.

³ IGBE Presse-Archiv, File 'Arbeitskräfte für den Bergbau. Neubergleute bis 1952', IGB, Referat Neubergleute, Circular 133/49, 21.1.1949; IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1952*, p.442; IGBEA Handakten Rudi Quast, File 'M. Assistenten-Tagungen (alt)', Minutes of 3rd meeting of Herner Kreis, 24.6.1953.

⁴ See, for example, the report on the youth conference in IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1953*, p.293.

democracy. Thus the union, too, talked of rescuing the youngsters from 'Vermassung' and nihilism.¹

The union's hostility to giving young miners the experience of participation advocated by the British had already emerged much earlier, namely in 1946 in a discussion between DGB leaders, August Schmidt (the IVB president) and Military Government representatives. A British official pointed out the discrepancy between the British law, which allowed all employees to vote in works council elections and the DGB ruling which restricted this right to the over 18's. Hans Böckler said 'er würde 10 mal lieber zum Arbeitsgericht gehen, als nur einem einzigen Jugendlichen unter 18 Jahren das Recht zugestehen, einen Betriebsrat zu wählen, oder selbst gewählt zu werden'. When Foulds, the British officer, pointed out that this was not likely to educate the youngsters to be good democrats and that the same held true for the DGB's minimum age of 24 for a works councillor, August Schmidt's reponse was to say that 24 was too low for the mining industry. For Schmidt a minimum age of 28-30 was more suitable.²

At a deeper level, the IGB shared much of the employers' world view as encapsulated in the contrast between 'Persönlichkeit' and 'Vermassung'. Astonishingly, given the recent past, the union felt obliged to defend itself against the employers' charge that, as a mass organisation it was contributing to Vermassung.³ The vision of the 'ständische Gesellschaft' was attractive to the union's conservative leaders who, as Hans-Eckbert Treu identified in his study

¹ DGBA Protokoll-Sammlung, IGB Hauptverwaltung (ed.), *Protokoll des 1. Verbandsjugendtags Bochum 1950, Sept. 22- 24*, Bochum 1950, comments of Malbaum and Bartoniczek, p.15 and p.31ff.; IGB Hauptverwaltung Abt. Jugend (ed.), *Geschäftsbericht 1950-1952*, p.54ff.

² Ernst Schmidt papers, File '1900', doc. 1946-10, 'Kurzer Bericht über eine Sitzung mit Vertretern der Militärregierung in Düsseldorf, 4.9.1946.

³ See Bartoniczek's comments in IGB Hauptverwaltung (ed.), *Protokoll des 1. Verbandsjugendtags*, p.31ff.

of the IGB, had a vision of restoring the *Bergmannsstand* of yore, of finding once more a firm place in a vanished social order.¹ Though this particular wish was unique to the IGB, Theo Pirker has argued convincingly that in the union movement generally, the older generation shared a great deal of the outlook in the opposite camp. Both had no understanding for youthful rebellion and 'eine ganz bestimmte Vorstellung der sozialen Ordnung..., eine Vorstellung dessen, was gehörig ist und nicht gehörig ist...'.²

On morality and culture, too, the older generation of union officials and that meant all the senior union men, had much in common with the employers and state representatives. Union representatives talked of leading youngsters towards the true values of Western culture, while rejecting the modern excesses of American civilisation. 'Wenn man sich anderswo so nackt wie eben möglich auszieht, so braucht das durchaus nicht unsere Lebensart zu werden'.³ Union officials, like employers, felt that young miners needed to learn good manners for their own sake and the status of the profession.⁴

Having said that, the local IGB and DGB youth organisations did offer a number of young miners a chance to learn a much more direct and participatory democracy.⁵ Many youngsters who found the lack of democracy in normal union meetings and congresses stifling, enjoyed a much freer atmosphere in the youth section.⁶ Younger union officials tended to be more informal, allowing

¹ See Hans-Eckbert Treu, *Stabilität und Wandel in der organisatorischen Entwicklung der Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau und Energie*, Frankfurt 1979, pp.105-6.

² Theo Pirker, 'Die Jugend in der Struktur unserer Gesellschaft', in DGB Abteilung Jugend (ed.), *Protokoll der Arbeitstagung der Gewerkschaftsjugend 25-30.11.1951*, Düsseldorf 1952, pp.7-30, here pp.10-19.

³ Helmut Schorr, 'Wege und Ziele der Gewerkschaftsjugend', talk reprinted in IGB Hauptverwaltung (ed.), *Protokoll des 1. Verbandsjugendtags*, p.88ff, here p.97.

⁴ A view not restricted to older officials alone, see Kadow's remarks in IGBEA Handakten Rudi Quast, File "M. Assistenten-Tagungen (alt)", 3rd Meeting of Herner Kreis, 24.6.1953.

⁵ See for instance Baroth, *Aber es waren schöne Zeiten*, p.177.

⁶ A fact obliquely confirmed in IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1953*, p.286. See also Treu, *Stabilität und Wandel*, pp.111-112.

youngsters to address them with the 'Du' form, for example, or incurring employer suspicions by allowing young apprentices to drive with them on the way to union weekends and camping trips.¹

In many respects the churches were more dissatisfied with the cultural work in the hostels than was the IGB. The problem for the former was that they felt neither state nor employer had all that much sympathy for their specific *denominational* concerns. 'Ich halte es nicht für klug, von konfessionellen Heimen zu sprechen, wohl aber, nach konfessionellen Gesichtspunkten zu handeln, da fast bei sämtlichen leitenden Stellen für unsere eigentliche Aufgabe wenig Verständnis vorhanden ist', wrote Caritas director v.Heyden to Bishop Keller in 1951.² Both Protestant and Catholic organisations, for example, often wanted to ensure that only youngsters of appropriate denomination came into their hostels,³ but were criticised by the employers for doing this.⁴ To compensate for the lack of missionary spirit in the general welfare and cultural measures, the churches organised their own programmes, the Catholics, for instance, launching their 'Laienaktion im Ruhrgebiet' in 1951. 'People's Missionaries' were sent into the camps and secret bible groups held there in contravention of camp regulations. The results, however, were negligible.⁵

An end to visions and nightmares: the hostels and their impact

How successful were the employers, the state or the church at putting across a specific message or transmitting the desired values to the young men in their

¹ Zimmermann papers, Interview with Heinrich Klever, 15.7.1980.

² BM A101, 252, B. v.Heyden to Bishop Keller, 15.3.1951.

³ BM A101, 253, Generalvikar, Memos, 11.3.1953 and 8.4.1953.

⁴ Klinkert Papers, File 'Niederschriften der Arbeitstagungen und Vortragsveranstaltungen', Vormbrock, 'Überblick über die bisherige Arbeit des Jugendheimstättenwerks'; File 'Sammlung Vorstandssitzungen', Minutes of executive meeting, 17.10.1958.

⁵ HStAD NW41, 746, Heinrich Werth to Weber, 21.6.1951; NW17, 140, Steinmeyer, Report, 14.11.1949; 'Der "Lager Mensch" - Symptom einer Entwicklung'.

charge? As far as the adult new miners were concerned, one problem limiting the effectiveness of cultural work in particular was that spending remained fairly limited. The VHS cultural work, for example, was very underfunded, receiving annually approximately 4 DM for each hostel inhabitant.¹ At least initially, the field workers had not yet been provided with phones and were spread too thin on the ground to see hostels more than once a fortnight.² As a result, they tended to concentrate on hostels where mine managements supported their efforts and to ignore the rest.³ It is therefore not surprising that a 1952 survey discovered that 60 percent of new miners had not taken part in any of the VHS courses offered in the hostels.⁴

The reasons for this lack of funding are not hard to find. Mine managers, though they may have shared the values and aspirations embodied in the lectures and other cultural work, were often reluctant to spend money on matters that seemed so far removed from the needs of daily production. There were, however, large variations here between collieries. One problem common to all was that they were nervous of investing too much in the outsiders for fear of alienating local men. The 'moral economy' of the indigenous workforce (and, it should be said, of those newcomers who had found lodgings or housing locally) dampened any potential over-exuberance in the provision of services for hostel occupants.⁵ Since the growing competition between the mines for labour nevertheless forced the employers to provide ever greater subsidies for board and lodging in the hostels, the limits to the social services budget and to the patience

¹ Ges.Verb. File 'I.II', section 024.3, Minutes of 5th Meeting of the Arbeitskreis III, 12.7.1949; Theodor Terhorst, 'Zehnjährige Zusammenarbeit im Dienste der Mitbestimmung beim Hamborner Bergbau', (unpub MS. 1963), p.134.

² HStAD NW17, 140, Steinmeyer to Regierungsrat Kraemer, 18.11.1949.

³ See, for instance, Terhorst, 'Zehnjährige Zusammenarbeit', p.134.

⁴ BM 201, 47, Sozial-Amt der ev. Kirche, 'Gedanken zur Volksbildungsarbeit im Steinkohlenbergbau', 20.9.1952.

⁵ See Köker's comments in Ges.Verb., File "'K", vol. 2', Minutes of KfSA meeting, 15.3.1951.

of the established miners both counselled managements to control their cultural expenditure.

As far as the apprentices were concerned, a great deal of money was invested in creating the right environment. Yet many of the hostels employed only a small number of personnel so that a lot of the contact with the youngsters fell on the shoulders of the hostel wardens or, as in the case of the Pestalozzi villages, the house parents. They were often not particularly well paid (indeed the KfSA itself admitted to being rather shocked at the employment conditions it found in some hostels) and, as a result, they often lacked the motivation or the qualifications to guide and instruct the youngsters very intensively.¹ In many cases, they were far more down to earth than the senior personnel involved in creating the institutions. In the Pestalozzi villages for example, house parents and village leaders were happy to let the youngsters concentrate on repairing their motorbikes rather than tilling the soil, much to the chagrin of the Pestalozzi Association's founders.²

For many hostel occupants, the lectures and courses offered were often wide of their target, either because they were too intellectually demanding, or because they were motivated by anxieties or concerns not shared by their audience.³ There were, however, those amongst the new miners who were very conscious of the break in their education caused by war and its aftermath and who responded enthusiastically to the educational opportunities offered.⁴ Courses on German

¹ *Mitteilungen der KfSA* 1951, 1/2, p.4.

² Klinkert Papers, File 'Niederschriften der Arbeitstagungen und Vortragsveranstaltungen', Minutes of meeting of village leaders, 10.12.1958. It was noteworthy that in 1954 the village leaders insisted on their title being changed from the archaic 'Dorfälteste' to 'Dorfleiter'. Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', pp.32-33.

³ Sozial-Amt der ev. Kirche, 'Gedanken zur Volksbildungsarbeit'.

⁴ *Ibid.* and HStAD NW17, 236, Joachim Müller to Bundesministerium für Erziehung und Unterricht, 20.11.1949.

and mathematics and other basic subjects found a small circle of keen participants.¹

In general, the hostel occupants seem to have 'subverted' what was offered for their own purposes, attending courses and events according to their entertainment value and ignoring those that seemed out merely to improve. Theatre and film evenings enjoyed good audiences, sporting events drew the best participation, while lectures were often poorly attended unless bolstered by a good slide show or a sexy topic. Thus a report from a Lohberg hostel in April 1950 noted 195 participants for the film 'Schüsse in Kabine 7', 104 for a lecture on 'Young women of today and their problems' but only 19 for 'The world of the unconscious'. The lecture 'Beautiful women in changing times' (with slides) overfilled the hall.²

The greater the choice of entertainment in the locality, the worse attended were the cultural events in the hostels. As local services improved after the war and television became more widespread in the hostels, the field workers found it ever more difficult to muster up an audience.³ Some concentrated on activities, such as sport, which were sure to win a wide following. Others were hostile to providing mere entertainment, and one report from Dinslaken went so far as to comment, 'Der Film scheint das einzige Bildungsmittel zu sein, daß die jungen Leute anerkennen, daneben noch der Rundfunk. Ich habe daher die Filmarbeit eingestellt'.⁴

¹ HStAD NW17, 10, Stadt Dortmund, Bildungswerk 'Kulturelle Betreuung der Bergarbeiterlager' to Kultusminister, 19.4.1950.

² HStAD NW17, 10, Report on cultural events in Lohberg, April 1950; IGBE Presse-Archiv, File 'Arbeitskräfte für den Bergbau. Neubergleute. Bis 1952', clipping from *Die Neue Zeitung*, Munich, (no date), 'Heimhochschule für Neubergleute. Die Dinslakener Arbeit ist beispielgebend im Ruhrgebiet'; 'Sport formt den Menschen', *Der Mittag*, Düsseldorf, 6.5.1950.

³ Ges. Verb. File 'Unternehmensverband 662-668', RAG report for 1954.

⁴ HStAD NW17, 10, Burisch to Kultusminister, 2.12.1949, annex.

Apart from the attendance problem, one of the weaknesses of the lectures and of other attempts to influence young miners was, as has already been noted, that a core message was often lacking. True, there was a clear 'yes' to democracy and a 'yes' to Europe, but in terms of practical politics or of moral and religious values there was often uncertainty and anxiety about what to communicate.

Much of the work was simply unnecessary, in that it was impelled or shaped by fears that were understandable but inappropriate. Gradually the realisation spread that neither the Ruhr in general nor the hostels in particular were hotbeds of radicalism. As a speaker at a conference on cultural policy noted in 1953, recent elections had revealed 'in welchem Ausmaß bereits dem Radikalismus und darüber hinaus dem Nihilismus abgesagt wurde'.¹ In fact, left-wing radicalism had at no point been a danger in the hostels, contrary to all the fears of employers, church and state. The KPD had, from the very beginning, found it hard to mobilise a following. 'Wir haben es noch nicht geschafft', noted the KPD's Ruhr organisation as early as 1946, 'die Jugend zu gewinnen'.² The SPD was quick to recognise and capitalise on hostel occupants' antipathy to the Communists.³ The fact that many of the outsiders to the Ruhr were expellees or refugees undoubtedly accounted for a lot of the KPD's difficulties.⁴ Renewed attempts by the KPD in 1951-52 to mobilise the new miners enjoyed little success,⁵ although newcomers, like established men, continued to vote respected

¹ Sieburg, 'Staatsbürgerliche Willensbildung in der kulturellen Bergmannsbetreuung'. In 1950's code, 'Radikalismus' meant the KPD while 'Nihilismus' stood for the extreme right wing parties.

² Ernst Schmidt Papers, File '1900', Doc. 1946-44, 'Resolutionsentwurf der KPD im Ruhrgebiet', no date [End of 1946].

³ ASD-FEST WW 68, Minutes of Ruhr mining conference on 31.8.1947 in Bochum, no date.

⁴ ASD-FEST N 25, 1946-1948, SPD Bezirk Westl. Westfalen, Report on the works council elections, 10.11.1947.

⁵ ASD-FEST N 171, 1952-1957, Undated, untitled KPD flysheet from the 'Ausschuß zur Wahrung der Interessen der Jung- und Neubergleute'.

KPD representatives on to the works council, years after the Communists had ceased to enjoy any following in municipal and national elections.

Contemporary youth turned out not even to be particularly rebellious, even if it did regard the older generations and established institutions with something less than the reverence they would have liked.¹ But that was a general feature of the age. How should the employers expect young miners to show appropriate respect for the authorities when the media generally showed so little?² As these tendencies became clear, a lot of the impetus behind the cultural programme disappeared.

Certain values were clearly shared by both the providers of cultural services and their recipients, so that the work here found a good resonance. Above all there was a very moral approach to public and political life.³ Communal welfare was rated above individual good; youth parliaments in the hostels tended to be draconian in their sentences.⁴ Though the approach of the older generation was often felt to be oppressive, no one advocated 'doing your own thing'. Party politics were often condemned as self-seeking.⁵ As far as private morality was concerned, though sexual mores were undoubtedly changing, there was nevertheless a strong current within the younger generation affirming the need for self-discipline and decency. It was noteworthy that when the speaker at the IGB conference made his comment about near nudity abroad, he was rewarded

¹ A point put to the employers by the Pastor Dannemann in 1956. See P. Arnold Dannemann, 'Die Situation des Jugendlichen im Steinkohlenbergbau und unsere pädagogische Verpflichtung', *Mitteilungen für die Bergberufsschulen der WBK* 1956, 4, here p.4.

² Kloppenburg, 'Jugend in Beruf und Freizeit', p.2.

³ See for instance the comments of Erich Burisch in HStAD NW17, 10, Burisch to Kultusminister, 2.12.1949, annex.

⁴ Roelen, 'Die Bedeutung der Pestalozzidörfer', p.89; More generally, see Pirker, 'Die Jugend in der Struktur unserer Gesellschaft', *passim*.

⁵ IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1953*, p.293; '1 Corps District Political Intelligence Report No. 20', 12.1.1946, cited in Christian Kunz, 'The history of National Socialism in Herne 1925-1949', (DPhil, Oxford University, 1987), p.375; Pirker, 'Die Jugend in der Struktur unserer Gesellschaft', *passim*.

with strong applause (a striking fact given that within twenty years naked Germans would be causing uproar across the beaches of southern Europe).¹

The proffered values met with least response as soon as they became romantic. Many hostel wardens, lecturers and churchmen identified this lack of illusions on the part of younger men, sometimes wrongly diagnosed as nihilism.² Appeals to the 'German spirit', the invoking of a 'christliche Weltanschauung' and so on, served only to repel the far more pragmatic and realistic younger generation. Thus, for instance, the pathos of the old labour movement left most of the new miners cold, but there was a ready understanding of the value and function of the union.

One major failure of the programme, from the employers' viewpoint, was that it had not kept newcomers and union apart, but then, whatever their deeper hopes, the employers had not really tried to do so. In the late 1940's and early 1950's they had, after all, been very cautious. In addition, the state's commitment to neutrality precluded propaganda work against the union on the part of the RAG, although the RAG's fieldworkers certainly preached social partnership and responsibility. It seems unlikely in any case that a more open assault on unionism would have had any success. New labour was generally well disposed to the union. The apprentices were almost 100 percent organised and it was noteworthy that in what was virtually the only mining strike since the currency reform, the 'Reusch strike' of 1955, considerable numbers of apprentices took part.³ The union did face membership problems with adult newcomers but these resulted more from the fact that many new miners were not intending to stay

¹ IGB Hauptverwaltung (ed.), *Protokoll des 1. Verbandsjugendtags*, p.97.

² Ges. Verb. File 'Unternehmensverband 662-668', RAG paper, 'Bergarbeiterbetreuung', no date [1951]; 'Der "Lager Mensch" - Symptom einer Entwicklung'.

³ Ges. Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß 1948-1958', Minutes of Arb. aus. f. A meeting, 3.2.1955.

long in the industry, rather than from any principled opposition.¹ A survey towards the end of the 1950's identified that virtually all the miners, even non-union members, believed the IGB was doing a valuable job and found no marked differences between old and new miners.²

Ultimately, neither the bourgeoisie nor the union got quite the following they wanted, but neither were their worst fears confirmed. As a result both union and employers had to come to terms with a generation that did not fit into conventional categories. This was the result of broad generational experiences on which it would be inappropriate to dwell here.³ What can be said is that the notion that the youngsters in the hostels would be more influenced by hostel lectures than by their peers or by broader social influences had been implausible from the very beginning.

For the employers crucial disappointment was the failure of the hostel environment to create a stable workforce. No doubt some of the lectures and guidance offered to hostel occupants had their positive impact: a decision here to enter the mining school after a lecture on career opportunities in mining; an accident avoided there as a result of gaining some general background knowledge about mining techniques and so on. But, generally speaking, there

¹ This problem arose after 1953, when, in response to a threatened IGB strike, the employers refused to deduct union dues automatically from the wages of union members. The union had to go out and collect dues and membership statistics fell off considerably as a result. Whereas prior to then, union organisation in the hostels had been nearly 100%, it dropped to as low as 40-50% in some areas. See IGB Bezirk IV (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1951*, p.27 and p.50 and IGB Bezirk VI (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1951/1952*, p.31, for the high level before the switch to 'Ortskassierung'; for the problems afterwards, see IGB Bezirk V (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1954-1955*, p.53 and IGB Bezirk VI (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1953*, pp.24-25. See also Treu, *Stabilität und Wandel*, p.58.

² Unpublished EMNID survey conducted in April 1958, the results of which are in manuscript form in possession of the IGBE, Bochum. The survey remains confidential and cannot be properly cited here, nevertheless the author was allowed to review the survey's main results, which revealed there to be a basically favourable attitude to the union from all miners and little difference in this respect between young and old or between established and new miners.

³ For an introduction to these generational experiences see Zimmermann, 'Ausbruchshoffnungen', *passtm* and Pirker, 'Die Jugend in der Struktur unserer Gesellschaft', *passtm*.

was little evidence that the finest hostels or the most intensive welfare and cultural policy made much difference to the wastage levels of adult new miners or of apprentices once they had finished their training. The negative aspects of the work and the appeal of other types of employment was too great. For example, the company with the longest experience of Pestalozzi villages was the Hamborner Bergbau AG (formerly Gruppe Hamborn of the GBAG) and in 1955 its training and social services director reported that the village had made little difference to the number of former apprentices leaving the company and worse, leaving the industry.¹ The Hibernia company had much the same to report a year or two later.²

In part, the propaganda work had been based on a myth - the myth that occupational loyalty was a matter of personality. By the mid 1950's, the employers were, as a discussion in the UVR's Manpower and Training committee made clear, coming to terms with the idea that the 'Tendenz zur Verwandlung des Berufs in einen Job, die z.T. in der Veränderung der technischen Produktion selbst begründet ist', had 'spread to the German economy'.³

In addition, providing entertainment in the hostels often actually inhibited the development of links with the locality. This, indeed, was the employers' aim as far as the apprentices were concerned. Towards the adult new miners too, the RAG field workers seemed often far more concerned to transmit ideals than create good local contacts.⁴ It must be acknowledged, however, that even when the wardens or fieldworkers were favourable to the idea, it was difficult to cement links between hostel and neighbourhood. Local sports organisations

¹ Ges. Verb. File 'Arbeitsausschuß', Minutes of Arb. aus. f.A meeting, 5.4.1955

² Hibernia Konzern (ed.), *Sozialbericht 1957*, p.24.

³ BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 033092, Minutes of AAA Meeting, 12.12.1956.

⁴ IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1952*, p.442 and IGBEA Handakten Rudi Quast, File 'M. Assistenten-Tagungen (alt)', 3rd Meeting of Herner Kreis, 24.6.1953.

often wanted only good talent and were not interested in offering a game to anyone who wished to come along.¹ Other groups had a specific religious or political affiliation, which made it difficult for the cultural workers to promote them.

The result was that the hostel environment, though in ideological terms perhaps less detached from the outside world than the employers wanted, was in social terms often rather isolated. It might be argued that the cultural work or the money invested in the hostels (or indeed the increasing subsidies for hostel accommodation) contributed to integration by making the hostel environment bearable or even attractive until such point as the occupants obtained a house or lodgings in the local community and that without such investment, wastage would have been higher. This may be so, but what seems to have happened, as far as the adult trainees were concerned, is that by passively or actively encouraging social isolation, the hostels prevented the growth of the sort of social ties that might have kept the newcomers in the industry.

There is, of course, no doubt that the provision of decently furnished hostels was essential during the 1940's and 1950's and there is equally no doubt that many of the former hostel occupants went on to be long serving members of the workforce. The decision to build apprentice accommodation on a grand scale opened up sources of well educated youngsters on whom the industry could not normally have drawn. Quite a number of these youngsters were to provide the deputies and lower management of the following decades.² For these reasons, the hostel programme was far from being a failure. It cannot even be asserted with certainty that any of the resources invested in the hostels would have been

¹ A repeated complaint of the VHS fieldworkers - see the various reports in HStad NW17 and IGB (ed.), *Jahrbuch 1952*, p.441 & *Jahrbuch 1955*, p.244.

² As revealed by a statistical analysis carried out by the author which used microfiche records of Bergeschüler held by the WBK, Bochum.

better spent elsewhere. It does seem likely, however, that if more money and energy had been expended on social integration - rather than on spiritually improving the newcomers or on recasting the workforce - many more hostel occupants would have been won for the industry. To take one small example: partly because of convenience, partly because of moral fears, provision was seldom made for young miners, even young adults, to bring girl friends back to the hostel. It was therefore often very difficult to develop intimate friendships with girls from the town.¹ This was a small but significant barrier to integration which the mines should have been able to solve.

What is certain is that many of the anxieties and hopes that shaped hostel policy and gave it such impetus and priority proved to be illusory. By the mid 1950's the mining employers were far sadder and wiser. By then, cultural welfare policy was running out of steam (though it enjoyed a brief flurry of official support in the 1954-55 period as a result of the increased influx from the GDR).² Between 1953 and 1956, the committee supervising the RAG did not meet once and when it met again in 1956 it did so despite clear signs of lack of interest from the UVR.³ In many adult hostels in the mid-1950's, the RAG field workers were barely in evidence, though the apprentices continued to enjoy their services for a while yet.⁴ Whereas in 1950, the *Förderturm*, for example, gave a great deal of space to Christmas activities for the new miners, the January 1954 issue devoted only a small paragraph and the January 1958 issue nothing at all to such activities. The churches too, lost both their sense of mission and their anxiety and gradually wound down their activities in the mines. A number of

¹ 'Jugend ohne innere Bindung', p.5

² See Ges. Verb. File 'SBZ Flüchtlinge Arb. 130.30-132.15', Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, Circular, 30.12.1955.

³ Ges. Verb. File 'Unternehmensverband 662-668', Kultusminister lle5 to Board of UVR, 9.7.1956; Ulrich, Memo, 18.4.1956; UVR to Kultusminister, 13.7.1956.

⁴ Ges. Verb. File 'Unternehmensverband 662-668', RAG report 1954; 'Kulturelle Betreuung', noted the IGB's Bezirk V, 'ist kaum noch zu verzeichnen', see IGB Bezirk V (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1954-55*, pp.20-21.

institutions continued to tick over, indeed some still exist, but more because of institutional inertia than for any other reason. The *Katholisches Lagerwerk* transferred its attentions to foreign exchanges for young people and indeed many of the mines' former villages were made available for general youth work, while others were turned into normal housing.¹

Even the core of the regeneration project, the apprentice hostels and villages, lost their appeal. Apart from their failure to prevent wastage, they could do nothing about the marked decline in the size and quality of apprentice intake from 1955 onwards.² By 1958, the mines felt that they were receiving only those youngsters whom the labour exchanges had difficulty disposing of elsewhere. According to one Pestalozzi village leader, 60 percent of the incoming youngsters had a criminal record.³ It is therefore no surprise that the executive of the Pestalozzi Association did not meet between October 1956 and March 1958 and that only half the board were present at the latter meeting.⁴ For a few more years apprentice hostels continued in operation, though in ever diminishing numbers, until by 1960 or so the stream of apprentices from outside the Ruhr had virtually disappeared.⁵ The great experiment was over.

¹ Ottokar Mund, (ed.), *25 Jahre Katholisches Lagerwerk e.V. Versuch einer zeitgeschichtlichen Übersicht*, Recklinghausen 1973; As early as 1957, the UVR had used free beds in villages and hostels to provide holiday homes for deprived Berlin children. BAK-ZwSt.H B102, 33092, Minutes of AAA meeting, 2.5.1957.

² See chapter 6, p.281ff.

³ Klinkert Papers, File 'Niederschriften der Arbeitstagungen und Vortragsveranstaltungen', Minutes of meeting of village leaders, 10.12.1958.

⁴ See records in Klinkert Papers, File 'Sammlung Vorstandssitzungen', Minutes of executive meeting, 14.3.1958.

⁵ UVR (ed.), *Jahresbericht 1958-1960*, p.89 facing; in 1956, 3,514 apprentices, or 40% of total apprentice intake, came from the Patenbezirke. By 1961, this had fallen to 91 apprentices or 9% of total intake. See Ges.Verb. File 'Niederschriften 1956-1967', Minutes of Arb.aus.f.A meeting, 4.10.1961.

Conclusion

In the pre-currency reform period¹ the greatest possible priority was given to increasing coal production and specifically to rebuilding the colliery workforces. Despite this enormous commitment, it proved extraordinarily difficult to harness labour effectively. In part this was due to the prescriptive inefficiency of controlled economies, in part to the simple fact that there was too little food to go round. Superimposed on these problems were the weaknesses inherent in the nature of British and later Bipartite rule. There was a conflict between the Allies' overseas commitments and the needs of the German economy. Then there was the fact that the Allies were ruling indirectly and yet lacked legitimacy amongst the civil servants, employers and labour on whom their efforts depended. There was a similar contradiction between the desire for political devolution and decentralisation, on the one hand, and the requirements of economic control on the other. For all these reasons, the British initially failed and later only half succeeded at providing sufficient resources for workforce regeneration and at ensuring those resources were deployed effectively.

Though more cost-effective, workforce regeneration was ultimately not much more successful in the post-1948 era. In the first place, the industry consistently lacked the funds necessary for the task, particularly in the years 1948-50. Erhard had not thought through (or was loath to respond to) the consequences of holding down the coal price to avoid inflation. As a result of the industry's recurrent financial problems, house-building suffered in the early years, while in the mid-1950's the mines could not afford to pay competitive wages.

¹ Since the problems of the 1945-48 period have been summarised earlier, only a very brief resumé is given here. See chapter 4, p.209ff.

Nevertheless, the failure to create a stable workforce was not due solely, perhaps not even mainly to the government's economic policy. The employers rightly recognised that money alone was not the key to success, yet they failed to find the formula that would hold labour in the mines.

The problem with the employers was that they were stuck in the past. Surely one of the most striking themes to have emerged in the last four chapters is the degree of continuity between pre-war policies and thinking and those of the post-1948 period. At one level this was not surprising. In the 1930's as in the post-war period, the mines found themselves in a situation where demand for coal was high but the price kept artificially low. It was only logical to pursue a strategy of 'immaterial gratification' in these circumstances. Yet beyond that, the employers' perception of the workforce remained frozen in that negative mould that had been set by the first mass influx of unskilled labour in the latter part of the 19th century. Their approach to labour took for granted the favourable labour market conditions that had disappeared in the 1930's. Their vision of the model miner harked, insofar as it was not pure illusion, even further back, namely to the first half of the 19th century. Their general values and their perceptions of society and social change were strongly reminiscent, not so much of Nazi ideology *per se*, as of those aspects of pre-Nazi conservative thinking on which Nazi ideology and symbolism itself had drawn.

These attitudes handicapped management in its approach to new labour. Above all, they prevented the industry from refashioning labour relations within the colliery and thus from solving one of the major causes of labour instability. Given the new competition mining faced on the labour market, the resourcefulness and background of many of its new recruits and the fact that the employers themselves recognised the need to find a *modus vivendi* with the IGB, there was no way that the traditional style of management could be effective.

The employers were unable also to drive a wedge between new labour and union. Indeed, apart from entrusting their hostels to the church, they did not really try. In part, this was because in the 1948-52 period union cooperation was indispensable to them. But it also reflected the fact that there was a great deal of common ground between colliery managers and union officials. Both were interested in creating a stable workforce. Both were concerned to keep out foreign labour. Both sought special support from the state. Above all, the IGB was at least as attracted as the employers to the notion of reviving the miners' lost status.

The union played an important role in integrating new labour. The absence of 'skill-barriers' with which to protect experienced workers from competition, the collective nature of the mining wage, the fact that safety in the mine depended on every miner and the sheer size of the new intake all made the established workforce vulnerable to the impact of the newcomers. Thus, whether they liked it or not, the IGB and the works councils were forced to take the newcomers under their wing and they proved quite successful at doing so. But they were unable to change the nature of the working experience in the mines and thus ultimately were powerless to stem the tide leaving the Ruhr.

The state too, though involved at all levels of integration policy, was unable to force a new style on to the industry. Indeed, state officials shared much of the employers' outlook. Nevertheless, various branches of the state administrations did try to modify a number of the mines' policies. Their most notable contributions were to strengthen the commitment to broader goals of societal integration (as opposed to the narrower aim of workforce rebuilding) and, in the interests of social harmony, to mute some of the more aggressive elements of employer policy. In a number of areas, particularly in the approach to redundancies and in housing, state and union removed or weakened the means by which management had traditionally disciplined the workforce.

They thus, at least partially, emasculated the mines' authoritarian management style. Yet they were unable to put something positive in place of that traditional style, above all because the influence of both state and union on day-to-day management within the mine was negligible.

The 1945-48 period and the post-currency reform era were thus united by a failure to regenerate the workforce effectively. Both the British and the Bergassessoren experienced immense difficulties in achieving quite limited results. The Allies' target was to be producing 400,000 tons a day by the end of 1948, yet the high levels of wastage and the low levels of efficiency with which the men were working meant that actual output fell far short of this. After 1948, the employers' priority was to create a stable and productive workforce and this they singularly failed to do. Not only was wastage substantial but, largely because of it, productivity remained well below pre-war levels for much of the period.

Common to both eras was the enormous challenge presented by mining's peculiar conditions. In the first place, regenerating the workforce (and reconstructing the industry generally) required resources on a scale that the governments of the day were understandably loath to supply. In 1945-46, the potential costs were primarily political: providing the incentives that the mines needed might lead either to unrest in Germany or to outrage in France. In 1948-50, the costs (or, at any rate, the costs as the government perceived them) were primarily economic. Erhard feared that if he increased the coal price inflation would result, while to raise taxation would undermine public confidence in the economy and retard growth elsewhere.

Why was it coal that generated these problems for the governments of the day? The reasons were very similar in both periods. In the first place, both in 1945-46 and in the 1948-50 period, the foreign consumers of German coal were

unwilling to pay a market price for it. That meant that an unfair burden had to fall on the German economy. Secondly, both the British and the Federal Government were trying to treat the mining industry in a way out of line with their general reconstruction policy. For the British, coal was the only German resource which they needed so badly that they were not prepared to follow the path of least resistance. In almost all other spheres of production they were willing to accept lower output, if doing so avoided major difficulties. For Erhard and the German administration, no other major industry was seen as presenting the same threat to price stability as coal. Thus, only coal was subject to such stringent price controls. Ultimately the point was that coal had a unique significance to the economy, was therefore treated specially and thus generated problems all of its own.

Eventually, the British and the German governments provided at least some of the resources required. The 1946-47 and 1951-52 periods mark the two turning points here. What did the delay in responding to mining's needs say about the two administrations? Both had proved a little inflexible, the British out of an understandable anxiety about civil unrest, the German government out of a perhaps slightly less justified fear of inflation. Common to both, also, was uncertainty about the degree of help that would be forthcoming from the United States. The British were unsure how much grain they could expect, while Erhard had probably expected that Marshall Aid would fill the gap in mining's funding.

It is not surprising to find, therefore, that in both cases it was the US which brought about the change in policy. But this was not just because of the Americans' economic clout. The Americans proved particularly flexible in their response to changing economic conditions. Arriving as the punishers of evil Germany, they rapidly recognised the need for a rapid recovery fuelled by an incentive-led mining industry. Then, enthusiastic defenders of the free market

though they were, they nevertheless had no qualms about vigorously advocating a *dirigiste* capital transfer policy to benefit bottleneck sectors of the economy.

Apart from the fact that mining made unique demands on the public purse, the other fundamental feature common to both the pre- and post-currency reform periods was that mining suffered from two key handicaps that made productive labour integration particularly difficult. In the first place, the work was very unattractive. The physical conditions were unpleasant and taxing, the dangers associated with the work considerable and the prospect of almost certain ill-health in old age most uninviting. These conditions bedevilled attempts to hold on to new labour throughout the period under review.

Secondly, the conditions under which coal was produced made it very difficult for management to create a positive and yet productive relationship with the workforce. The problem was that most of the time the men worked alone, beyond direct control. Managerial control was necessary, however, because safety demanded it and because, unlike many other industries, the tempo of production was not regulated by machines. So, somehow, at the limited points of contact with the men - either during the deputy's twice daily rounds or in the monthly contract wage negotiations - management had to assert itself and achieve a good level of output. Management's authority over the production process was therefore fragile and there was a danger that it might lose control. That, indeed, was the problem in the 1945-48 period when, because of their political principles and their fear of unrest, the British were unable to come down firmly on management's side. At the same time, there was inherent in the nature of coal production the opposite danger, namely, that in struggling to maintain control, management would ultimately adopt an approach so unyielding and authoritarian as to drive new recruits from the pit. That was the scourge of the post-1948 era.

It might be argued that the difficulty of conditions was such as to *preclude* results any better than those achieved, particularly in the 1950's. One line of reasoning might be that most other European countries were experiencing similar difficulties. Belgium, for instance, had employed foreign labour since 1951. Did this not suggest that Germany could hope for little better? It may be, of course, that managements in those countries, too, lacked the vision to respond to post-war conditions. However, the central point is that the presence of millions of refugees, expellees and other uprooted groups presented the Germans with an opportunity not existing anywhere else in Europe. Uniquely, the Ruhr mines were offered the chance to integrate a vast group of youngsters and adults, many of them unwillingly mobile and seeking a secure profession. The comparative argument is therefore not compelling. It is true, however, that once the German government had failed to fund the housing programme in the early years, mining's chances of profiting from this special opportunity were significantly reduced.

Another line of argument might well be that the production conditions existing in the 1950's precluded more modern styles of management. In its analysis of wastage, the Institut für Sozialforschung concluded:¹

Es spricht vieles dafür, daß die Autoritätsstruktur im Bergbau, das Verhältnis zwischen Vorgesetzten und Untergebenen, insbesondere die im Vergleich zum Industriemeister weitergehenden Machtbefugnisse der Steiger, mit den spezifischen Arbeitsbedingungen unter Tage zusammenhängt.

Yet, in reality, this was being over-generous to the industry. The only sense in which one could see production conditions as being *the* decisive cause of management style and technique in mining was that, in those industries which in the 19th century had shared mining's style of management, technical changes

¹ Institut für Sozialforschung, 'Die subjektiven und objektiven Abkehrgründe', p.228.

had in the meantime undermined this naked authoritarianism and produced a new approach. The enormous increase of management control and technical coordination in the factory environment had produced a different, less authoritarian style and had transformed lower management's role from subaltern to intermediary and conciliator. To that extent, it was mining's inability to attain factory production's levels of control and coordination that was ultimately decisive for the maintenance of 'Grubenmilitarismus'.¹

This did *not* mean - and this is where the Institut für Sozialforschung was wrong - that many aspects of management could not be changed, if there was a will. It meant only that technical development had not of itself created the impetus for change. The real problem during the 1940's and 1950's was that there was too little interest within the industry to create a new type of management. There was grave distrust of modern methods. The Mining School - the establishment where deputies and overmen received their training - contained in its curriculum 'no provision for acquainting the students with modern management techniques or labour relations'.² An illuminating episode came at the end of the 1940's, when the Americans were trying to persuade German managements to adopt their TWI (Training Within Industry) Programme. The programme's goal was to disseminate new techniques of man-management and team leadership, particularly at shop-floor level, with the aim of enhancing morale and productivity. Many industries responded enthusiastically to the idea, but mining's response was luke-warm and little seems to have been undertaken.³ The experts in the Manpower and Training Committee who took 'Alarm im Bergbau' so seriously were really at odds with the main tenor of

¹ Weltz, *Vorgesetzte zwischen Management und Arbeitern, passim*; Ludwig v. Friedeburg, *Soziologie des Betriebsklimas. Studien zur Deutung empirischer Untersuchungen in industriellen Großbetrieben*, Frankfurt/M 1966², pp.106-126.

² WWA S22 (OMGUS), Manpower 7/44-2/14, Shaw to Marshall, 22.10.1948.

³ WWA S22 (OMGUS), Manpower 7/44-2/14, Memo from Leo Werts; Manpower 7/51-1/3 GWJ Cole Chief, Manpower Gp, BICO, to J.Chairmen UKUSCCG; Snyder to Cole, 28.2.1949.

opinion in the industry. The debate about training policy revealed all too clearly the gulf between the training experts on the one hand and the 'Betriebsführer' on the other.

Change did come to the industry but much later, in the 1960's and 1970's, as the labour directors' influence grew, the pace of technological change quickened and the industry came to terms with the contraction in coal demand. The author was able personally to experience a very different type of management when on a visit in the Friedrich Heinrich mine in 1984. As our small group of visitors neared the coal face, the overman was approached by a small group of miners who were having a problem with the influx of water. What was striking for someone with a knowledge of labour relations in the 1950's was the nature of the relationship here. There was, on the part of the men, no deference, except for the deference to expertise and on the part of the overman no side or terseness or ordering about, but a consultative and confident approach to the problem. It was a small indication of the way recession, technological change and government intervention had turned the mining industry upside down since the early 1960's. In the era of the new miners, however, mining's authoritarian past was far more evident than its liberal future.

Is the story of the new miners unique? Many other industries had suffered large workforce losses and some of the problems associated with creating a skilled, young workforce in the mining industry applied elsewhere too. The iron and steel industry, for instance, experienced throughout the 1950's some difficulty in getting its new labour to stay.¹ Secondly, many of mining's difficulties in obtaining and deploying resources prior to 1948 were general features of the period; labour everywhere was working very inefficiently. In this respect,

¹ See Pirker, Braun, and Lutz, *Arbeiter Management Mitbestimmung*, esp. p.219ff. Workforce turnover was, however, only a small fraction of the equivalent rate in mining.

mining's experiences hold good for the whole economy. Finally, the cultural, moral and political hopes and fears that the welfare programme brought to light after 1948 were probably to be found in a great many sections of Germany's provincial bourgeoisie. The welfare programme probably had countless analogues elsewhere, not so much in relation to specific industrial groups, but in more general programmes addressed to homeless youngsters and to the younger generation in general.¹

But surely the final conclusion must be that rebuilding the workforce in the mines was uniquely challenging. It enjoyed an urgency and a priority in the early post-1945 period unrivalled by almost any other task of social and economic reconstruction. After 1948, the mines were excluded from the spoils, but expected to follow the rules, of the market economy in a way true of no other major industry. Above all, no other industry raised the same barriers to labour integration or the same problems of labour control.

Ultimately, of course, failure to create a stable workforce in the Ruhr proved not to be all that serious. Certainly, the economic and human costs in the 1940's and 1950's were substantial. But by 1958, the rapid growth of alternative sources of cheap energy and Germany's comfortable trade surplus had freed the economy from its dependence on home-produced coal. Since 1958, therefore, the Ruhr's basic problem has been not how to retain labour but how to get rid of it. For many of the 'unwillingly mobile', attracted to the Ruhr in the 1940's and early 1950's with the promise of secure employment, the following decades were to be a very unpleasant experience.²

¹ These conclusions are of necessity very tentative because youth remains one of the most under-researched aspects of the reconstruction era.

² Rudolf Grenzer, 'Den vertriebenen Bergleuten droht jetzt Vertreibung aus dem Beruf', in *Ost- und Mitteldeutsche Heimatnote*, 1966, 14, 5/6, pp.1-3.

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15	RWKS;
30	BAG Neue Hoffnung;

¹ With the closure of the mine, the archive has now been disbanded. Some of the materials (including all the files listed here) have been transferred to the WWA. The remainder have been destroyed.

² To facilitate identification in archives, like the AZG, where the materials were not properly ordered and there was no clear list of shelf numbers, the exact description on the file cover is given here in quotes.

³ A loose folder with "61" on the cover. This probably means I 1 61 in the firm's classification.

'210.0/2-214.1 Jugendwohnheime';
 '215.0-215.4 Jugendwohnheime';
 '240.0-242.0 Jugendpläne ab 1954';
 '250-267 Arbeitsgemeinschaft Heimstatthilfe';
 '122.300 Bildungswesen, Houerausbildung' (2 files)

2) Papers of Housing Department

'Wohnungswesen Ausschuß 9 Wohnung und Siedlung';
 '4 Bergarbeiterwohnungsbauprogramm 41 Programme - Bezirksaus-
 schuß-Sitzungen 1951-1953';
 ' " " " " 1954-1961'

3) Papers of former mines' reception camp Heisingen (Ges.Verb., Heisingen papers)

Logbook of the camp;
 Annual reports of the camp;
 Loose statistical papers

4) Unpublished statistical materials of the Statistik der Kohlenwirtschaft, e.V. (Ges.Verb., StdKW)

Tables showing wastage, intake and causes of labour loss

Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf (HStaD)

NW9, 10, 73, 81, 87, 109 Wiederaufbauministerium;
 NW17 Kultusministerium;
 NW41, 42, 45, 62, 63, 67, 200 Arbeits- u. Sozialministerium;
 NW53, 179 Staatskanzlei

Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf, Zweigstelle Kalkum (HStaD Kalkum)

Bergamt Duisburg;
 Bergamt Dinslaken

Archive of the Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau und Energie, Bochum (IGBEA)

Annual reports of IGB and IGB districts;
 V1,V2,V3,V6 Vorstandsakten;
 'Werbung';
 'Rundschreiben der Verwaltung' (3 vols 1950-1953);
 BR 3, 5, 7, 9 Betriebsratsabteilung;
 Div 1,2 Mat. Heinrich Weeke;
 T4;
 W14, W22.1, W22.2, W22.3;
 'Jugend';
 Handakten Rudi Quast;
 Pressearchiv'

Private papers from Jugendheimstättenwerk Pestalozzi-Vereinigung e.V., in possession of Herr Klinkert, Gelsenkirchen (Klinkert Papers)

Loose paper - Minutes of 1st meeting of Jhstw PV;
 'Niederschriften der Arbeitstagungen und Vortragsveranstaltungen';
 'Sammlung Vorstandssitzungen ab 1956'

Archive of the Landesoberbergamt, Dortmund (OBADA)

I 1002, 1003, Erlasse ;
 I 2023, 2100, 2107 Bergbehörden;
 I 3050, 3062, 3063, 3850, 3873, 3874

Grubensicherheit, Gesundheitsschutz;
 I 5200, 5203, 5207, 5208 Bestrafung;
 I 6000, 6300, 118.10, 6301, 6303, 6305, 6307, 6308
 Ausbildung;
 I 7301 Zulagen;
 I 8000 Bergwirtschaft;
 I 8005, 8006, 8007 Arbeitseinsatz;
 I 8010 Lageberichte;
 I 9101 DKBL

Parlamentsarchiv, Bonn (PA)

1 Zonenbeirat;
 2 Wirtschaftsrat

Public Records Office, Kew (PRO)

FO 942 Economic and Industrial Planning Staff;
 FO 943 Control Office: Economic;
 FO 1005 Records Library

Archive of the Sozialforschungsstelle, Dortmund (SoFoStA)

'Datteln II. Verleihbares Material';
 'Dr. Jantke Sozialausschüsse der evgl. Kirche 4.11.51 12';
 ' " " " " 11';
 'Datteler Neubergleute-Befragung';
 'Untersuchung Vincke Lager'

Staatsarchiv, Münster (StaM)

Arbeitsamt - Ahlen, Bochum, Bottrop, Dortmund, Gelsenkirchen;
 Bergamt - Bochum 1 (A12), Bottrop (A18), Castrop Rauxel (A7), Dortmund
 (A4), Gelsenkirchen (A11), Herne (A8);
 Regierung Arnsberg - Wohnbauförderung B401 3.2, B411;
 Regierung Münster - Wohnbauförderung B220/2, B219/220

Archive of the Westfälische Berggewerkschaftskasse, Bochum (WBKA)

Microfiche records of pupils of the Bergschule;
 Verwaltungsberichte;
Mitteilungen für die Bergberufsschulen;
 'Statistische Erfassung der bergmännischen Berufs- und Fachschulen',
 vols 1 - 4

Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv, Dortmund (WWA)

F26 Concordia;
 F29 Alte Haase
 F35 Arenberg
 S 22 (OMGUS) AG 1945 to 1949;
 BICO ERP SEC 11/90 to 11/101;
 BICO BISEC 11/101 to 11/109;
 BICO PABR 11/121 to 11/122;
 BICO BECG/PABR 11/132 to 11/135;
 BICO JSEC 11/138 to 11/139;
 BICO LIB BR 11/140 to 11/149;
 BICO 17/8192 to 17/8208;
 CO HIST BR 3/404 to 3/410;
 COS 3/176 to 3/177;
 Manpower 7/43 to 7/51, 17/257 to 17/258;
 ODI 7/25 to 7/27

1.2: Interviews and Conversations

A) Interviews/ conversations conducted by the author

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 Walther Köpping (former new miner and IGBE executive member for culture and education), August 1982;
 Dr. Heinz Steffen (former personnel director, HBAG), December 1982, May 1983;
 Clemens Kreienhorst (former Communist head of Hibernia works council), August 1983;
 Siegfried Schroeder (former IGB official responsible for new miners), February 1984;
 Professor Helmut Croon (former researcher of the Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund), April 1984;
 Hans Alker (former new miner and at time of interview deputy president of the IGBE), May 1984;
 Josef Laslop (former new miner and expellee), May 1984;
 Henry Collins CBE (former head of NGCC, later NCB production director), June 1984;
 Alfons Nowak (former new miner), July 1985;
 Hubert Sommerfeld (former new miner and at time of interview still a miner), July 1985

B) Interview transcripts made available by

The LUSIR group, Fernuniversität Hagen (Interviews with former new miners Hans-Georg Stasiewsky, Paul Scheffler, Rudolf Sass, Stefan Puhr, Anton Kessner, Konrad Boronski; Interview with Josef Hermes);

Michael Zimmermann, Alte Synagoge, Essen (Interview with Heinrich Kleve)

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Bonkowski, Heinfried, 'Im Kohlenpott und anderswo... Erinnerungen und Gedanken eines Kumpels', (Unpublished Ms, Lünen-Horstmar, 1981)

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Arbeit und Sozialpolitik

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Die Bergbau-Industrie

Bergbau-Rundschau

Bergbau und Wirtschaft

Bergfreiheit

Bundesarbeitsblatt

Der Förderturm (works newspaper of the GBAG's Gruppe Hamborn, later Hamborner Bergbau AG)

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