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MINERS' WORK

(A sociological outline)

This paper is a synthesis of the results of a sociological research in mining work and miners' life, which was done by the author in the late forties. The research itself was done partly in the coalfields of Rosice and Oslavany (CRO) as the initial research, partly in the district of the associated coalmines of Ostrava and Karviná (OK) as the comparative one. It is interesting that the crucial points of its basic bearing and many development trends found in the miners' social dynamics coincide with the conclusions of the extensive complex sociological research of miners' work and their leisure time activities in the region of the OK, realized by the Research Institute of Mining Economy in Ostrava under the leadership of the university lecturer Karel Wysocký in the early sixties (1964—1966).¹ The methodological significance of the development linking is standing out quite distinctly.²

In the further context I am going to make an attempt to summarize the results of my own research in their direct outcome in the precisely determined range of the miners' working considerations.

The miner's social status is inseparable from his achievement at his place of work, from his working function. It follows undoubtedly, from the social need and the importance of coal-mining at all, which is quite evident from the point of view of national economy. This is not much affected so far even by the undeniable fact that the constantly more intensive use of other resources of energy (mineral oil, earth gas, and prospectively nuclear energy in particular) is becoming more and more conspicuous also in our country with the coming of the scientific-technical revolution (STR); in conformity with this natural trend of development the portion of the coal output will naturally decrease in the course of time.³

The specific and complicated conditions of miner's work in the pit and its evaluation in the vast social context form a close unity of his social position, which has been determined by the development. The working aspects (working hours and the character of miner's achievement in his pit) and the free-time ones (these were been treated by the author in another context)⁴ complete each other.

It is natural that, at the time of the research, sharp contrasts appear between the context of the capitalist, which is dying away from the past, and the socialist system, which is conspicuously starting. Their tenor is

clearly in favour of the socialist social system, including naturally also its constant development progress.

In our subject the claims on the culture of work, on the culture of the working time and free time environment, lead to a more conspicuous manifestation of the miner's self-help, i.e. to make his subjective contribution to his pit work felt. It is quite in accordance with the results of my research that the miner—already in the course of the research work—has formed his own relation, his inner attitude to the work itself. The work under capitalism was for him, first of all, the source of his living and poor sustenance, both personal and his family's. It was, by far, not sufficient, as it is shown in the past by the necessary social function of his supplementary farming. The same fact is affirmed by the development of the miner's legal security. It was accompanied inseparably by this economic and social (class) struggle, which in the past determined both his existence and his social and professional status (both as an individual and as a group); it included the situation of his family and the living standard of all its members.

It would be interesting to make an exhaustive and systematic comparison of the miner's present-day working function with that found by my field research. Although this necessity appears to be quite urgent I am not able to do so from time and technical reasons. It remains to be the task of a future similar monography, which will be done by a team in the future. The basis of a similar work could be a comparison of the conclusions of this article with the results of the mentioned research in the OK area.

It is understandable that the miner's working function is inseparable from the complex of his leisure-time conditions. It is testified by the sequence of the partial sections in the context.

In the future the importance of this aspect will greatly increase. A particularly close connection remains between the miner's working function and the sanitary hygienic conditions of his workplace and this whole living environment. In both these sections, the miner's working style and his whole living style undergoes intense and constant changes. I am fully aware of this fact. By the way, I tried to deal with them at another place.⁵ In the mentioned article I put my question in a more modest way: to describe the specific features of the miner's working function, partly at the level of his objective functioning including, besides the mining process itself, the complex of factors determining him in the pit, partly also at the very mobile subjective level, i.e. the back reflex of the factors which form usually the conditions of the miner's working process in their revaluing effect on the miner's group or individual conscience. From these aspects I am comming now to deal with the subject of my article.⁶

Let us observe the miner's working function nowadays. Miner's work can be characterized as hard manual work, which is done underground in difficult atmospheric conditions. At present it is most frequently performed by means of all accesible technical devices (automatic hammer, electric safety lamp, air pipe-lines, sliding trough, mechanized pit transport, etc.).

The direct consequences of this mechanization in the miner's individual output are very limited in the concrete conditions of his workplace. Hard physical pains, accompanied by a great strain of his nerves, prevail at all times. Besides, his exacting performance in the pit is nearly always connected with a high risk of a light, serious, eventually also mortal injuries, owing to particular work tasks caused by the objective character of the workplace itself.⁷ It is interesting that the difficulty of the miner's constant working in the pit is felt by the subject, if you like, first of all, evaluated as a disadvantage. It is even not too surprising if we realize the complex of the objective conditions determining the particular character of the miner's pit performance at his frequently very narrow and uneasy workplace.

They include the natural and technical conditions of his workplace, in particular the seam extent, which determines the miner's working position (if supine, sitting, on his knees, or standing upright) and naturally also the strain and the intensity of his working performance. Further these factors include also the climatic conditions of the pit work (as temperature, damp, and airing). Out of the remaining technical conditions influencing, to a great extent, the working process in the pit, it is the illumination of the working place and of the whole working space. Then it is noise and vibration, which are inseparable parts of the miner's working process with a chipping hammer or coal ploughs and of his nerve and sense strain. In case of a mechanization of his personal working performance in the pit, the chipping hammer is still the only highest degree reached at the majority of the pit mining working places. If we add the hard breathable atmosphere or the exhausting pit work, the constant lack of daylight, oppressive and increasing heat, damp, wet, abundance of coal dust, offensive odour and dirt, frequent space narrowness and uneasiness, we have got a rich scale of the objectively given difficult conditions of the miner's pit working place.

In the descending sequence of his subjective evaluation of his own work performance, the miner adds further factors influencing his specific working process: physical strain, health dangers (accidents or work diseases), the complexity of his work performance (consisting of a nearly incomprehensible variety of partial working performances), time and space linking of individual partial operations (at any break-down or disfunction undoubtedly complicating the process of their rapid and undisturbed sequence), the consoling psychic compensation of his nearly constant working strain apparent also from his irritated and provoking utterances. The scope of a so much differentiated scale of objective limitations to the miner's working operations, constantly modified by the working place, is reflected in both his constant and extreme readiness and in his increasing nerve exhaustion. The miners are usually well aware of this fact. ("Every must be a bit of a bricklayer, a carpenter, an electrician and not only of the miner; he must know how to handle every sort of work -- and at the same time he must always be ready.") The constant newness of his working operations, his personal responsibility in performing them ("for himself and his whole working party"), the heterogeneity, diversity and great changeability of his working situations make the miner on the

alert and initiative in his working improvisation in most varied, rapidly changing situations.

The difficulty of the miner's physical work in the pit is considerable and indisputable, it is also evaluated so by the miners themselves. In my research I came only exceptionally across a different evaluation of the pit work, in particular by those who, during their lifetime, had learned another type of work (e.g. in a stone-pit, quarry) except the work in the coal pit.

When comparing their own toil with the other kinds of workmen's work (e.g. in the textile and, in particular, in the engineering industries) the miners judge that the physical troublesomeness of their work is quite obvious. It is substantiated also by the work danger and the inconvenience of the pit working place mentioned already in the preceding context (in particular the constant working in water).

The miner usually realizes that at the moment he is entering the cage at the beginning of the shift the possibility of an injury is strongly increasing. The slight and numerous accidents accompanying inseparably the miner's work and life give sufficient evidence of this fact. In performing his work, however, the miner does not usually think of the imminent danger. The accident rate in the underground work increases naturally the course of the miner's accident curve.

Even his stereotyped working behaviour does not exclude a self-preservative attention reflex, in some working situations — according to the subjective miner's interpretation in the course of our research — a foreboding gets master of the miner. An instinctive estimate informs him of an imminent danger. It is already illustrated by a research document, which I am citing literally for its convincingness: A 86-year-old miner, a pensioner, from the town Oslavany, relates such a piece of his experience: "... the black soil itself is working and loosening its own forces in its inward. I was working in the fore part, suddenly I felt a dreadful danger... I should have stopped working, but it wouldn't be miner-like. Then the supervisor came. There were a lot of talks. They said there was no danger. When they had left I started again. I only slightly set my mine hammer going and now it was here... all was displaced, it was rolling all the time. My helper, still a boy, ran away. The lights went out, I was in the **dark**. I jumped down from the wall, a piece of stone fell on my leg. I was hurled away. I couldn't make a movement. All was rolling down over me... great luck for me, it was on a slope. Stones and rocks were considerable. I was nearly all buried. Then finally all stopped. The help came. My leg was broken..." Well, quite simply, without any pathos, the miner describes one of his numerous risky working situations, when only his quick estimation and the following instant decision decide upon his life. Let us notice that even here the foreboded danger is being suppressed and superimposed by the command of work, by the manifestation of the miner's solidarity, of the professional pride: "It wouldn't be miner-like." (See the above-mentioned situation.)

From my own experience I know that the miner's fear of the danger threatening him at work and vague thoughts of its imminence and intensity are reflected largely in the opinion of the vast miners' public.

They find repercussion in the influence exerted upon their decision, in particular in choosing their children's future calling. They are, naturally, one of the causes of the difficulty to stabilize the numbers of trunk miners.⁸

Now I am passing over to the subjective level of the miner's socio-psychological attitude to his work (as reflected both in the individual and in the group). Its relation to the level of the objective working process is not identical, but it presents a diversified scale of qualitative features. To analyze them is the object of the second part of my treatise. I am fully aware of the fact that in its elaboration it is not quite possible to draw a clear dividing line between these two types of levels.

It means that I am concentrating my attention, in particular, on the following points: the miner's inner relation to work and its present modifications, the overall character of miner's work as seen by them. I will take into account the miner's life approach, his oral utterances showing the motives in choosing his life occupation; and finally his conception of work as the basic means of subsistence for him and his family interfering with a new, qualitatively higher, conception, when his own work appears to him no more as social necessity, but, in some respect, as having already a deeper meaning for his personal life.

The starting point of my considerations and research is, in the first place, the miner's attitude to his work. His working function in society is not only represented by the amount of his output achieved by his working performance and the appropriate financial reward for it; that would be too little if it were not represented even by his personal relation to his achieved work.

Is his employment the prerequisite of keeping the bare existence of his own and of his whole family? It is sure to have been so in the past decades, as they appear by individual stages in the miner's memories in the course of our research: the period of Austria-Hungary, the period of private ownership of coalmines by joint-stock companies at the time between the two World Wars, and, in particular, that of a foreign power, the German occupation. The men are sure to have been forced to go to the mines by the living necessity. At the time of the German occupation even a strict labour command with a discriminating addition of national and social character: "bis zum Kriegsende eingesetzt".

As early as in the past decades the miner often put in his work much more than it was expressed in his financial reward, what, however, made him and his mates a living elemental working group.⁹ Hence his extreme self-sacrificing at the moment of a pit danger, hence the usual and frequent mourning by retired miners for their previous hard and dangerous work in the early days of their pension. It is the sorrow, which so often becomes unexpectedly master of their hearts and depresses them.

Notwithstanding it is necessary to see the miner's personal relation to his work without illusions; it means in its genetic roots. If you put the miners the question why they work, in the majority of cases you can hear a bit more realistic answer — it was so at least at the time of the researches — first of all to have something to live on, they themselves as well as their families. Delight on work? This is often missing, they say,

in particular, with those who entered the mining occupation at the time of the economic depression in the thirties having previously worked in another branch of industry, or it is felt subsequently. Proceeding from the analysis of their statements, I should rather say it is unconscious. It is often identical with the consciousness of working necessity, with the duty to lead the way, with the prospects of work tasks and is increased by the fairness of their wages compared with the wages in other branches of industry. At the bottom of many a miner's heart there is his previous discontentedness. His deeply rooted personal and social distrust prevents him from taking a more positive and natural attitude. It is impossible not to see the things as they are in the broad genetic context.

Comprehensibly the gradual development of the miner's position brings along also a change in their access toward their work. As far as it was permitted in the past by the difficult primitive technical miner's equipment, the output did not go down; so much the sooner that it was kept up artificially by the working tasks strictly measured out and by constantly increasing surveillance of the pit supervisors. Their function then was rather coercive than that of qualified advisers and leading co-operators. They were frequently compelled to that by the exploiting pit management. There were also considerable differences in the qualification and in the character of the supervisors, as shown by their behaviour towards the miners. Their real qualities, both personal and professional, were usually revealed quite rightly and accordingly evaluated by them.

The miner's attitude towards his work, which, in spite of all the dangers of the pit workplace, he likes, compelled him, by itself, to a fair and constant average output. He slowly lost the deeper sense of his work, its social connection and function. Being unable to make himself personally and existentially free from it, he began to project his inner cleavage also socially. He slowly became heartless and embittered. So his seemingly sharply anti-social attitude arose, motivated by his own class position, whether unconscious or conscious. It appeared the more frequently, the more conspicuously his hard work was rewarded beyond the miner's living sustenance. (The economic space of need and the existence minimum according to Ogburn's classification of the living standard.) In the villages he could sometimes cope with this inner conflict, in particular when his own farming enabled him to improve not only his economic position, but — sooner than to the rest of the village community — to maintain partly his previous social status and with it the inseparable, in the course of development strongly undermined, previous social prestige.

There appear, however, more positive connections discovered by the researches. In an interview with the miners it is easy to learn that the working process in its numerous pit variants prevails in their interests. In their most varied subject matters they turn usually their talks again and again to their pit work. This is an undeniable testimony to the fact that the miner's work is hard, dangerous, a full-man one, which, in its burdensomeness, can be appreciated again only by the miner himself. Being innerly balanced he overlooks the results of his work (his work euphoria, a relaxing feeling of well-being, if a successful piece of work is in question, which cannot be compensated by any financial reward), at the

changing of the shifts he overlooks and scrutinizes his mate's work. Sometimes only words of appreciation can be heard, which, pronounced direct to the individual person, would not sound manifold. It is sometimes even surprising how the old mining boys are really sensitive to the appreciation of their work by their superiors, whose authority they fully respect (the foreman or the mine engineer); especially, if they are fair, sensitive and objective. Of course, the miner must not give himself away, it would seem a manifestation of inexpiable personal weakness and impotence.

How successful and outstanding the co-operation of such a working group, of a good party and of the broader pit crew, is at the working place,¹⁰ can be seen at the moments of a failure, of a pit accident, or at the time of an extraordinary working effort. Sometimes even here the words of praise are sparing and mistakes are made by immoderate and undue reserve. The words of appreciation are measured off by the miner very carefully and with difficulty. He grudges them and spares them as well as the relation to his own hard work is gradually becoming plain and beautiful. In spite of all their subjective reservations this principally positive socio-psychologic miner's attitude is appearing quite clear. It is acknowledged by the direct experience of the majority of those who have worked for some time with the miners in the pit, whether as brigade-workers after the war or as the pit-appointed ones in the war-time.

When evaluating his own work the miner mentions most frequently all its typical features: technical and underground difficulties, strain, life danger, time-limitation, etc. When comparing the present time with the past, he points out its insufficient wage equivalent (in comparing it with the financial evaluation of the other workmen's occupations, in particular, with those considered in his opinion less difficult and less strenuous). The miner himself considers his work socially very important. He has been reassured in this by his experiences at the war-time higher wages, higher rations of all sorts, which raised his social prestige with the other groups of population, in the villages, in particular, with the farmers. Conceivably the development trend of his own evaluation increased sharply after the year 1945, reassured by the rich complex of official manifestations and utterances of the party leaders, government members, trade-union functionaries, by the press, radio, posters, mining brigade-workers or by an increased recruitment of miners' apprentices of late.

All the more bitterly the miner misses the corresponding financial consequences of this fact. On comparing his own wages with those of the other workmen's occupations and trades he refers to the frequent disproportion in rewarding various kinds of work and is surprisingly very sensitive in this respect, in spite of all his working-class solidarity. (He demands — and in the majority of cases quite rightfully — that the superiority and troublesomeness of his work may find direct expression also in wage priority.) ("I shall be really content when the miner gets his due.")

The character of the miner's work is and remains still in spite of all the technical achievements, a hard and uncompromising battle with the Earth and its forces. In thousands of variations, in the same, but yet always new, working situations, the miner must constantly be alert and

ready. He is sure to have summarized and classified prudently his previous experiences. But if his immediate and direct fighting against the Earth, against its movements and shifts, against the water force, fire, and gas, is concerned, his situation is quickly changing. In addition, other accompanying circumstances make his work impossible and rather complicated; they are oppressive heat, excessive amount of pit powder, increased exhaustiveness, constant darkness interrupted nowadays only by the blinking of an already electric miner's lamp. These difficulties and troubles are usually increased also by the space cumbersomeness of his working place, frequently very narrow. In addition, there is constant and imminent danger of an possible accident or even of death. Such conditions of his pit working place bring him nearer to the life of the cave-dwellers of the pre-historic time. They make his senses sharp, keep him watchful, demand his attention, and awaken his instincts, in particular, that of self-preservation.

It is conceivable that in such situations the miner's vocabulary and the functional usage of his means of expression undergo a violent change.¹¹

By the performance of his own occupation and by the psychic experiences accompanying it (seemingly stereotyped by constant repetition and yet again and again unexpected and new) the miner is, to a certain extent, put far back; as far as somewhere, to the very natural base of the immediate and constant fight of man for pure life; in particular, if we take no account of the technical achievements which there are at the miner's disposal nowadays. Notwithstanding, their import must not be overestimated. Frequently the one-sided and insufficient mechanization of our mines, as shown in the physical burdensomeness and strenuousness of his individual working performance, are, besides the already old and scarce staff of miners, one of the prevailing causes of the already mentioned bottle-necked coal output. Also at present, a disproportion between the need for stabilized numbers of miners and the disfunctioning trend of their fluctuation is apparent.

One of the important factors of the miner's work is the determination of the motives which have led him to his work. The family continuity maintaining mining as their traditional occupation is now disappearing very rapidly. It was still intensive enough in the previous generation — with the present-day miner's fathers — and nearly regular in that of their grandfathers. It is out of question that its loss (nearly complete in the area of CRO, but strongly shaken in the area of OK) is in direct connection with the economic and social reasons: with the miner's desire for social rise and his effort to make his life existence more secure or to enable his children to have a less unpleasant and dangerous work.

The interruption of traditional miner's family continuity has also direct psychological roots. As asserted by some miners of Oslavany the exteuation of the custom to wear the miner's uniform and the abolition of the special miners' festivals caused, undoubtedly, the decline of the miners' social prestige and led to the weakening of the miners' tradition, not only with the youngest generation, but also in the eyes of the general public.¹²

If we overlook the motives leading to the choice of the miner's occupa-

tion (the CRO area) we find that the individuals who had chosen this occupation from economic and social reasons were more numerous than those who were personally interested in underground work. At the same time there were some special reasons, such as the relative constancy of work, old-age, accident and sickness insurances or the family security in case of the miner's death.¹³

Formerly in many cases the parents will determined their sons' vocation. In recent years, in accordance with the disappearing miners' tradition, these cases are still less frequent. In the past the second-born and younger sons of the farmers' families found their vocation in the mines; in addition, skilled artisans, who were not able to find employment anywhere else, such as bricklayers, carpenters, locksmiths, electricians, and engineers. The numbers of miners were increased by those who, owing to their inferior abilities, could not make themselves useful elsewhere; in many cases there appears direct relationship to the standard achieved at school. There were among the miners even those who achieved good or even high standards, but who were unable, owing to bad economic situation of their parents, to learn a craft or trade, or to attend a grammar school.

In the time of the economic crisis (1929—1933), the mines became the place of general resort for multitudes of craftsmen and tradesmen who, in consequence of the bad economic situation, were not able to found their independent subsistence, but, at the same time, they were directly or indirectly expelled from the employee's relation to their masters. (A drastic case: Mr. W. J., a barber by vocation from Oslavany, who was secured 15 Czechoslovak crowns (!) per week by the wage system of that time.) At that time we could find bakers, tailors, barbers, shoemakers, butchers, chemists, shopkeepers of all sorts and also those who had finished their studies at the commercial schools, or even those who had not graduated, among the people apprenticed for the miners' trade.

The great variety of the miners' social origins and their previous original occupations in the CRO area is sure to have been one of the causes of the high fluctuation and the mass withdrawal from the miners' business after the year 1945. The situation in the other mining areas, especially in the OK area, was developing alike.¹⁴

The miner's life attitude does not interfere with his sound estimation of his place in the social system or it does not heighten excessively his own pretentiousness. He is, however, aware of the importance of his work. He finds excessive talking about social preferences in mining superficial and trite. They affect him in an unpleasant way, particularly if they are to postpone the wage regulation. In the same way they decline the newspaper articles and radio programmes of the sort. They regard both as inappropriate, and sometimes even as disturbing. On the other hand, they follow with understanding and sympathy all serious interest (scientific research) in their social position, economic situation, and their leisure-time activities.

In spite of all objections and exceptions, the miner's life attitude is predominantly optimistic. He likes to talk about these subject matters quite freely. From my own experience I know that when interviewed

individually or in groups, they always turned their talks to their own work, to the various ways and difficulties of its objective evaluation.

The results of the researches show that the miner's life is becoming more and more differentiated socially and in the scope of interests. For a real miner his work still remains the main concern of his life. A sixty-year-old miner. Mr. J. S. from Oslavany, when asked by the author of this thesis, what he would like to be if he could choose his vocation again, answered: "A miner again, but under different conditions." It is necessary to understand this exception. It reflects rather his bitter past experiences (miner's conservatism) than the present-day development trend. The present miner's situation must be seen in its development dynamics. It fully conforms with the determination of the working function of any other social group in their wider social context. It is fully applicable also for the miner's social group.

The scope of the structural changes in our mining industry after the year 1945, characterized by the nationalization of the mines, established a new, much wider, social basis.

Many of the miners had experienced the years of the lock-out as consequence of their different political conviction fifteen years ago.¹⁵ That was why they could appreciate the fact that the power was shifted into their hands and that there was nothing done against their interest in the business concern.¹⁶ This, along with the old tradition of the concern, was able to create the optimistic atmosphere of creative co-operation which was so necessary for increasing the coal output.

It is quite understandable that the miner, along with the securing and protection of his rights, feels also the increase of his social duties, his deeper social responsibilities. From the sociological point of view it is evident for the future. Their political and trade-unionist maturity and profound cultural outlook, their strengthening vocational solidarity, will help to realize this tendency, which was also confirmed by the research.¹⁷

Translated by Jan Nejezchleb

NOTES

- ¹ Cf. Informativní příručka (Information Handbook), edited by 3rd department of the Central Committee of the CP of Czechoslovakia in Ostrava, Sept. 1964, compiled by the team of workers of the Work Economy Division of the Research Workplace of the Fuel Economics from the Research Base in Ostrava and by the lecturers of Central committee of the CP.
- ² The results of my researches have been confirmed by the results of the later researches made in OK region; as well as by argument of the opponent at the reviewer's discussion held on Nov. 30th. 1966, in Ostrava and attended by the author.
- ³ Cf. the book by *Radovan Richta* & comp. *Civilizace na rozcestí* (Civilization at the Crossroads, the social and human connections of the scientific and technical revolution), Edition 1, published by Svoboda, Prague 1966, pp. 22-23.
- ⁴ E.g. in the MS. of my postgraduate thesis *Sociology of the Miner*, Part I, apologized before the appropriate scientific commission in Prague on Sept. 27th, 1966.
- ⁵ Cf. my thesis *Miner's Hygiene in Sociologická revue* (Review of Sociology) in Brno, Vol. 14, pp. 192-206.

- ⁶ Cf. my article *The Miner's Social Function in Věda a život (Science and Life)*, in Brno, 1947, pp. 127–136.
- ⁷ The results of a complex sociological research in the KD area with the statistical data compiled by Mr. K. *Wysocký*.
- ⁸ Cf. the data in *Informační příručka (Information Handbook)*, pp. 9–11 and the attached diagrams, pp. 20–25 and 26–29 of I. H.
- ⁹ The term Working community is used in accordance with the conception of Mr. *Ferdinand Tönnies*, his *Gemeinschaft* contrasted with *Gesellschaft*. I suppose that in the tradition of the development of the Czech sociology this usage is more appropriate than the broader and, newly introduced conception of Mr. *J. Szcze- pański*. His „Koncept pospolitosti“ includes essentially all groups of people in which a certain social force is arising and kept up.
- Quoted from the Czech translation by Mr. *M. Disman* of his *The Essential Concepts of Sociology*, p. 90; published by Nakladatelství politické literatury, Prague, Edition 1, 1966.
- ¹⁰ This has been confirmed not only by the results of my field research in the second half of the forties, but also by the present-day pit situation. It is confirmed by the conclusions of the above-mentioned sociological research of the KO coal-mining area. It shows that the future sociological research must take the same direction in its orientation.
- ¹¹ Cf. my article *The Miner's Language (Hornická řeč)* in *Slezský sborník*, Vol. 1948, pp. 103–125.
- ¹² Its new, more developed form, the Miner's Day, stressing the social prestige of the miner's work, confirms it even for the present time.
- ¹³ Also at the present time the diversity of subsistence motives prevails over the personal interests in the miner's vocation; the scale is, however, changing quickly its range. Cf. the MS. of the Conclusion Report of the above-mentioned sociological research of the KO coal-mining area in the years 1964–1965.
- ¹⁴ The relative homogeneity of the predominantly rural hinterland of the CRO area with limited possibilities of another industrial vocation has led to a quicker stabilization in the course of the development compared with that of the KO area. So by the middle of the sixties in the CRO area it was 90 per cent of the overall initial state while in the KO area it was only a bit over 70 per cent; it is very conspicuous from the viewpoint of the development.
- ¹⁵ From the second half of the forties.
- ¹⁶ Freely quoted from the article by *Ing. J. Teindl* in „*Naše doba*“, Vol. 22, No. 9–10, p. 444.
- ¹⁷ The same are the conclusions of the Conclusion Report in MS. of the sociological research of the KO area, which is sure to be soon published.

HORNÍKOVA PRÁCE

Ve svém příspěvku se pokouším o sociologický náčrt dílčích aspektů *horníkovy práce* pod zemí i s minimálním rozpětím souvislosti mimopracovních. Obě sféry horníkova života – *pracovní i mimopracovní* – tvoří přitom nedílnou jednotu, vzájemně se ovlivňují a zasahují. Pracovní i mimopracovní projevy horníkova života živě rezonují i v jeho bezprostředním sociálním prostředí (hlavně rodinném a příbuzenském), i v širším přílehlém prostředí mimohornickém. Svou zpětnou vazbou tak pomáhají vytvářet horníkův *sociální status* i proměnnou hladinu *společenské prestiže*.

Výkladový kontext mé práce je výsledkem systematického sociologického výzkumu, převážně *kvalitativního* typu, realizovaného s využitím metodologického aparátu pluralistického souboru dostupných technik. Uskutečněn byl ve druhé polovině 40. let v oblasti rosicko-oslavanského revíru (ROD) jako východiskové, v oblasti ostravsko-karvinského revíru (SOKD) jako srovnávací. Některé jeho závěry (odraz konkrétních úseků hornické šetřené tematiky) byly už dílem publikovány jinde, dílem použity ve své výsledné interpretaci i vyhodnocující rovině také jinak.

V tomto článku jsem se pokusil o závěrečnou syntézu svých šetření, dotýkající se právě nejzávažnější problematiky hornictví vůbec – důlní práce.

Hornická práce v podzemí je fyzicky krajně namáhavým, rizikovým a poměrně složitým osobním výkonem havíře na jeho pracovišti, vykonávaným za specifických podmínek v důlním prostředí. Přes všechnu postupující mechanizaci důlní těžby vyžaduje stále intenzivní vypětí i přímou dřinu svého bezprostředního vykonavatele — horníka. Její specifické podmínky mají své složky *objektivní i subjektivní*, které zůstávají v těsných recipročních i zpětných vazbách, jak v poměru k horníku samotnému, tak i k odrazu tohoto vztahu v jeho širším sociálním prostředí.

Objektivní podmínky horníkova důlního úsilí determinují, často určujícím způsobem, jeho důlní výkon, jeho kvantitu i kvalitu, konfrontací s plněním jeho požadovaných norem. Patří k nim: *přírodně technické* jeho pracoviště, úzce korespondující v horníkové pracovní poloze jeho pracovního výkonu, *klimatické podmínky* jeho práce v hlubině (především teplota, mokro, prach a větrání) a konečně *jiné technické podmínky*, pro splnění jeho výkonových norem nezbytné (zahrnující osvětlení jeho pracoviště, stoupající podíl hluku a vibrace), které zatím bezprostředně platí i za pronikání důlní mechanizace. Riziko možného pracovního úrazu či nemoci z povolání je od horníkovy důlní pracovní expozice neodlučitelné. Zdravotně bezpečnostní předpisy je poněkud zmenšují, ale nelikvidují.

Různorodost a složitost bohatě členěné škály důlních pracovních úkonů u kmenového horníka je pro jeho výkon na pracovišti stejně příznačná jako jeho rizikovitost či stupeň jeho fyziologického zatížení (hlavně neurosenzorického). Tak se vytváří i automatický horníkův *pracovní stereotyp*, bohatými zkušenostmi postupně obměňovaný, zvláště citlivě reagující na chvíle vypjatého důlního nebezpečí.

Subjektivní složky horníkovy práce v hlubině jsou odrazem jejich objektivních determinant v jeho vědomí: individuálním i skupinovým. Významným přitom zůstává horníkův *vlastní poměr* k jeho práci. Je poznamenán zpětným působením nejrůznějších vln sociální mobility v jeho vývoji (zvláště zřetelně ve 30. letech, v době krize, za okupace v údobí totálního nasazení, i v prudkých změnách po roce 1945). I tak zůstává zřejmé, že strukturálními proměnami našeho širšího sociálního kontextu, jeho postupnou socializací, především po znárodnění dolů, byl vytvořen základní předpoklad jeho určujícího vymezení rostoucího významu druhu práce horníkovy jako *centrálního činitele* v jeho životě. Má své různé variace uvolňující či deviační (mzdové, bytové, zdravotní, srovnávací profese atp.); má však i své obměny sociálně psychologické, zpevňující a integrující hornictví (vědomí specifčnosti jeho sociálního významu či zodpovědná horníkova spolupráce v jeho pracovní skupině apod.); a ani komplexní složitost hornické práce („stálého potýkání se zemí, s jejími pohyby i přesuny, s živly vodními, ohněm i s plyny“) ji neruší. Poznamenává ovšem horníkovu *mentalitu*, odráží se v jeho chování, především v jeho projevech jazykových.

Význačné rysy hornické práce vyznačují zpětně v širším společenském prostředí. Dnes leckdy podvazují svobodnou volbu hornictví jako cíl životního povolání, uvolňují živou hornickou rodinnou tradici, přivádějí sem i dočasné brigádníky a vytlačují i za měnící se energetické situace nezbytnost hornické kmenové stabilizace. Ovlivňují horníkův hodnotový systém i jeho životní postoj. Přes všechny úzké profily jeví se ve shodě s výsledky výzkumu převážně optimistickými.

Po roce 1945 přes všechny dílčí deviace v obou šetřených revírech (ROD i SOKD) postupně narůstá trend tvořivé hornické spolupráce. Vytváří se její nové sociální klima na dolech samých i v širším společenském rozptýlu. Postupně sílí horníkovo vědomí, že přes všechny otevřené problémy, vedle zajištění základních hornických *práv*, vystupuje i míra vlastních *povinností*; hornické pracovní zodpovědnosti především. Rostoucí politická i odborářská aktivita horníků, prohlubující se jejich rozhled kulturní, silící vazby jejich profesionální jednoty, ale i *celospolečenské integrace* jsou výzkumně zjištěné vývojové trendy, zřejmě v hornickém terénu už v době mého výzkumu. Jsou však i výhledově příslibem *kvalitativně nového* uplatnění tvůrčích rozvojových sil: pro úspěch hornictví samého i progresivní vývoj celé naší sociální skutečnosti.