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1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper, devoted to the challenges of civilisation facing the community of the Katowice voivodship near the end of the 20th century, is made up of three relatively symmetrical and complementary parts. First, we examine the results of the transformations of 1989–1996 in this problematic area of both Poland and Europe. Second, we present an overview of the major programmes and scenarios for restructuring the voivodship elaborated in recent years, including: (a) the Regional Contract for the Katowice Voivodship, a social agreement prepared in 1995; (b) the Markowski plan for the reconstruction and reform of the mining industry prepared in 1995–1996; and (c) the project of the Special Economic Zones in the voivodship. Third, we list a series of multi-dimensional changes which could at least create hope for the success of reforms in the region, including the strengthening of education, the promotion of a new individualism, and other necessary transformations in economic, political and cultural structures.

The central theme of the text is the conviction that, for political and social...
reasons, radical restructuring solutions for heavy industry in the Katowice voivodship are being postponed or even put into hibernation. The policy of implementing only cosmetic changes in the mining industry is still operative, its main justification being a declared concern for state security regarding power production. The slow reduction of workplaces in that industry is related to the political power of the working class and its trade union representation. One must also not forget the electoral power of this relatively small, but densely populated and easily mobilised region. The social reasons for the slow pace of change are also significant, such as poor retraining facilities, the lack of an alternative labour market, and the still strongly represented conviction that mining plays a major role in civilisation. For these reasons, the Katowice voivodship and its economy have not been subject to more profound restructuring processes such as in the Łódź voivodship, for example. The negotiating strength of the textile industry and the political position of the textile workers in Łódź are not comparable to those of the mining industry and miners in Upper Silesia.

Special attention will be given in this paper to local and regional employment policy in the years 1989–1996. Counteracting unemployment and its social consequences, job-retraining activities, changes in the education system: these are particularly important elements of the restructuring activities in the voivodship, which remains dominated by traditional heavy industry. They are also indicators of the success or failure of such activities, and of the institutions and individuals involved. It is the authors’ belief that, although the present study deals with only one region, the conclusions drawn have a more general value. They may be applied – albeit cautiously – to other highly problematic industrial areas in Poland and throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

2. RESTRUCTURING OF THE KATOWICE VOIVODSHIP IN

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Restructuring and Employment in Katowice

Table 1  Public and private sector employees in 1989, by major industrial grouping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry grouping</th>
<th>Number of employees in sector in Katowice</th>
<th>Percentage of nationwide total in sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>779 800</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and commerce</td>
<td>45 400</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>112 700</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>59 000</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>14 000</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>40 200</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>89 600</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1989–1996: AN ANALYSIS


The Katowice voivodship covers 6650 km², which amounts to a mere 2.1% of the total territory of Poland. Yet its population amounts to nearly 4 million, or 10.2% of the total population of the country. Nearly 87% of the population of the voivodship lives in 53 towns, with the remainder residing in 43 village communities. The average population density (590 people / km²) is more than four times the mean value for the country. In 1989, this relatively small territory hosted 520 state-owned industrial enterprises, some 10% of such enterprises in Poland. This included 65 hard coal mines, 13 power plants, and 19 steel works. Also, some 255 construction firms were operating here, alongside 82 farming and agricultural enterprises, of which 20 were state farms. The voivodship hosted 45 foreign enterprises and as many as 34,834 small workshops, the majority of which were private and run by families. The public sector employed 1.3 million people in 1989, while the private sector employed 265,500 (see table 1).

The voivodship’s 265,500 private-sector employees represented just 5% of the national total in 1989. In addition, the following proportions of major categories of Polish industrial and metallurgical pro-
duction originated in the region: 98% of hard coal; 57% of pig iron; 53% of mill iron products; 49% of automobiles; and 100% of zinc and lead. Finally, the voivodship accounted for 25% of national product and 20% of all Polish exports.

In accordance with the former leading ideological principle of real socialism, the rule of full employment also applied in the Katowice voivodship. In practice, this meant tolerating excessive employment in state-owned enterprises and covering up hidden unemployment in rural areas. There was also so-called social employment in key industries. Those who held these “social” positions were not necessary for production processes, yet were not made redundant for social and doctrinal reasons.

In the years 1989–1990, the educational capital of the employed was modest and by no means suitable for the upcoming restructuring efforts. Of Poland’s 49 voivodships, Katowice was ranked 32nd in terms of proportion of the workforce with a university education; 48th in other higher and secondary education; and 41st in general secondary education. The level of formal qualifications of the inhabitants of the region, measured by education level, was also relatively low. As of 1989, 2% of the population had not completed primary education; 36% had completed only primary education; 31% had completed vocational education (lower than secondary); 25% had completed secondary school; and only 6% had a university education.

The social system in the voivodship on the verge of transformation was rich and interesting. Traditional divisions, such as by job or social class, were complemented by cultural differences. The Katowice voivodship is a cultural “border region”, a melting-pot, a place of contact and even conflict between various cultures, societies and communities. Some of these groups deserve specific mention. The first is comprised of migrants to the voivodship from other parts of Poland, who came in search of better careers, a more civilised life, better education, or an improved standard of living. The second group consists of Silesians, native people who have lived in the region for generations. The third major group is found in the community of the Zagłębie Dąbrowskie region and the portion of Małopolska brought into the voivodship after territorial-administrative changes.

The environmental situation of the voivodship in the years 1989–1990

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*The label real socialism refers to the political and economic structure existing in Poland from 1944–1990. The adjective “real” indicates the difference between this type of functioning state socialism and the ideal project explored in the writings of 19th and 20th century thinkers (eg Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Rosa Luxemburg, and Nikolai Bukharin).*
proved extremely complicated. The economy of the voivodship in these years was responsible for the emission of as many as 742 toxins or substances harming the natural environment, and 240 factories were considered particularly burdensome on the environment. The Katowice voivodship accounted for 19.5% of dust emitted into the atmosphere in Poland (305,300 tonnes), as well as 24% of the gases (1.3 million tonnes), and 25% of total liquid industrial waste dumped straight into the surface water. The region also contained 39% of all waste products in the country stored within factories and enterprises, an estimated 1.5–1.7 billion tonnes.\(^5\)

Concentrations of dust in the air exceeded the permissible norm \((50 \text{ mg/m}^3)\) throughout the voivodship. The chaotically planned and organised urban developments and architecture were also in poor condition. Chaos in spatial organisation manifested itself not only in the inconvenient mixture of housing districts and burdensome industrial zones, in the degradation of old districts of towns, or in the faulty solutions to transportation or commuter problems. It was also seen clearly in the oversized housing districts, where no culture could develop and which created anti-social attitudes, and where not even the most basic services were provided.

The people living and working in the region suffered severely from this difficult situation. It was estimated in 1990 that a million people were present every day in particularly hazardous areas, where the norms for toxicity were being exceeded. No wonder, then, that the health of the population was and remains poor. When compared with the rest of the country, the incidence of tuberculosis is three times as high, and people die more often of various forms of acute cancer, diseases of the circulatory system and diabetes. Almost 45% of all pregnant women suffered from one form or another of pathology in their pregnancy, while 10% of infants were born prematurely. The infant mortality rate further testified to the scale of degradation of the region: average infant mortality in Poland was 14 per 1000, while the average for the voivodship was 18.1, with a rate of 30 per 1000 in its most environmentally and socially degraded areas.

Negative environmental and health conditions in the region provoke questions about actions taken by regional and local authorities, the inhabitants themselves, and political and social institutions. Undoubtedly, the authorities in the voivodship were determined to encourage intensive investment in heavy industry in Upper Silesia throughout the period of real socialism. This behaviour, leading to an

\(^5\) This huge pile of rubbish, often radioactive, increased by several million tonnes every year, and some 300 hectares of land were needed to establish new refuse heaps and dump sites. If the waste already accumulated were distributed evenly on the entire territory of the voivodship, the result would be a layer of refuse over 170 cm thick.
over-concentration of industry utilising outdated technologies, had a specific justification. It was, after all, the simplest way for regional and local elites to strengthen their position in the central configuration of power. Under the former system, a time of fetishes for industrial gigantism, the presence of industrial giants in one’s territory of influence was not only a matter of symbol and prestige, it also influenced the position of regional elites in the overall power system. Surely, this factor influenced policy regarding industrial locations, and as a result the largest steel works in Europe, the largest dairy, the largest coking plant, and more were situated within the boundaries of the Katowice voivodship. Such investments were usually undertaken or planned against the expressed will of local communities, which were incapacitated and pushed to the margin.

Studies of existing documents and the results of numerous investigations and observations allow us to identify some general characteristics of the Katowice voivodship in the years 1989–1990:

- **Nature** – environmental catastrophe;
- **Production system** – economic “monoculture” and domination of heavy industry;
- **Social infrastructure** – deformed employment structure coupled with low education capital;
- **Socio-cultural system** – disintegration of the regional community;
- **Urban development** – chaotic town planning and architecture.

The scale of the problems which the Katowice voivodship faced on the verge of transformation earned it the labels “catastrophic” and “skansen-like”, both within Poland and throughout Europe. It was believed at that time that the critical point had been exceeded, and that even herculean efforts on the part of regional or local communities would never be effective without economic and political support from outside the voivodship. Thus the difficulties of the Katowice voivodship fell to the whole country to bear, especially since the success of regional transformation is con-
sidered one of the conditions for the success of Polish systemic and economic reforms, as well as for fulfilling aspirations to join the European Union.

From the very start of the transformation, explanations for this extremely difficult situation have been sought. The *Silesian syndrome* – the profound degradation of the natural, production, technological, socio-cultural and political systems in the voivodship – have most often been explained as the results of “internal colonisation”.7 However, this theory evokes some doubts. As said by Kukliński:

“Talking to the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, one finds many instances of regret that the region was exploited as a colony of Poland for so many years. This opinion can find some justification. But a totally opposite theory may also find justification. After all, for many years Silesia excessively attracted investments which could have been better used in other regions.... For 40 years Silesia conducted a suicidal policy, adding more and more branches of industry which made living conditions more and more difficult.”

Throughout nearly the entire period of real socialism, miners and metallurgists of the Katowice voivodship received good salaries and had other privileges. Coal mining was treated as mining for “black gold”, and the ethos of hard physical labour was glorified. Miners had higher-than-standard leisure centres at their disposal, special shops with a wider range of products on offer, as well as access to precious and scarce goods, such as automobiles or excursions abroad. They also enjoyed access to cheap housing provided by the mines themselves, while mothers who brought their sons up to be miners were given awards. Miners were pronounced – at least in words – a class with a “special mission” in the development of civilisation. These circumstances all help account for the phenomenon of migration from all over Poland to the Katowice voivodship, as the vision of the “Eldorado of Katowice” spread like a virus.

2.2. The Janus face: The Katowice voivodship in 1996

The processes of systemic transformation, initiated in the years 1989–1990, directly influenced the Katowice voivodship on at least four dimensions: its economy, environment, society, and space. When illustrating these dimensions, it is possible to draw upon the mythological fig-

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ure of Janus, who had two faces: one beautiful, the other gloomy. The most obvious manifestations of the transformation have been the slow but continuous privatisation of state-owned enterprises and the collapse and bankruptcy of those enterprises which were either most problematic for the environment or extremely unprofitable. Since 1980, the number of industrial employees in the Katowice voivodship has been on the wane: from 905,100 in 1980 to 767,700 in 1990 and 634,100 on 31 December 1995. From 1990 to 1995, employment in the public sector dropped from 76% to 56%, while increasing in the private sector from 24% to 44%. In 1990, the register of all those employed in the voivodship comprised 1,513,900 persons, of which 1,138,500 were in the public sector and 375,400 in the private sector. In 1994, the figures were 1,492,700 total employed, of which 866,100 were in the public sector and 626,600 in the private. The economic recession, liquidation of enterprises, bankruptcies and privatisation resulted in the loss of nearly 300,000 jobs in industry in the voivodship in the period 1980–1994. However, the so-called social jobs are still maintained for some 40,000–60,000 people, mainly in mining.

In 1994, when privatisation accelerated, there were 377 state-owned enterprises in the process of ownership change, increasing to 427 in 1995. Also, the number of enterprises with the state as sole shareholder increased from 127 in 1994 to 143 in 1995, as did the number of enterprises in liquidation or already liquidated (from 82 to 90). In 1994, the symbolic and economically fully justified decision was made to start the liquidation of the first four unprofitable coal mines. The number of self-employed persons increased at the same time. In 1993, a total of 199,500 enterprises were registered, while a year later this figure amounted to 211,500 – of which 173,500 were run by individuals. The tempo and scope of privatisation in the Katowice voivodship is, however, far from satisfying. There are several reasons for this, including:

- mistakes in privatisations undertaken so far, causing many employees to believe that privatisation means unemployment and tragedy for themselves and their families;
- a negative approach to the idea of privatisation of large and medium-sized enterprises, by both the employees and conservative trade unions;
- deep, multi-generational links between employees and the mine or

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9 In 1994, the Polish statistical Classification of the National Economy was replaced with the European Classification of Employment. Thus, the comparison of statistics from 1990–1994 with those from 1995–1996 may prove somewhat misleading.
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foundry in which they work, with the attitude that since the workplace is owned by the state, it is thus de facto owned by its employees;
• a feeling of social and employment security associated with state-owned enterprises;
• an unwillingness to enter the competition process which is forced upon privatised enterprises.

The economic transformation of the voivodship has been accompanied by several forms of degradation experienced by workers’ families, mainly the families of miners. The first of these is economic degradation. Traditionally, miners were financially privileged, with an average income double the national average. In 1995 that proportion dropped substantially, and now the average income of miners amounts to 1.3–1.5 times the average income in other branches of industry. A new phenomenon is the appearance of very young pensioners in mining, people who retire at the age of 43 to 45 years – and who are often forced to do so. Their pensions usually amount to about half of their income during employment, and do not provide an adequate lifestyle. Many of them undertake various illegal or half-legal economic activities in the informal economy.

A second type of degradation experienced by workers, no less important or clear, is symbolic or prestige degradation. In the period of real socialism, manipulative pedagogy consolidated the earlier-mentioned conviction that the working class in heavy industry had a special mission in the development of civilisation. A system of privileges connected with particular categories of jobs, particularly in mining, was also developed. These were partially dismantled in the transformation process, but the absence of explanations about the transformations resulted in deep feelings of self-recrimination, a tendency to seek blame elsewhere, and beliefs in international conspiracy theories aiming to destroy the Polish mining industry (eg involving the World Bank).

Another form of degradation in traditional families has been the deterioration of living conditions in housing estates administered and owned by industrial enterprises. The mining industry itself administers some 160,000 flats in such estates, in which no renovations have been carried out for years. Many of these are in a state of complete disrepair and obsolescence. Difficulties experienced by the industry translate directly into housing problems for those who live in these flats, as no renovations or repairs are under way, and their administration is far from effective. Similar situations can be found in buildings owned by the metallurgical industry, where there are numerous accounts of occupants turning down ownership offers for the decapitalised flats, which are sometimes even offered for free by steel works in a difficult economic situation.

All these circumstances add up to the fact that a whole new group of redundant people in traditional industries appeared in the Katowice
voivodship, prone to radical and populist rhetoric. Some of these may form the shell of a social underclass, drawn into a vicious circle of poverty, poor education, and dependence on the social care system. As a result, the clients of Regional Employment Centres often live in the district ghettos of this social underclass in many towns in the voivodship.

The Regional Employment Centres were established in Poland in 1990, with the purpose of registering the unemployed and preventing unemployment, according to the Law on Employment of 29 December 1989. Within the territory of the Katowice voivodship, 23 such institutions have been established. On 31 December 1990, the first official unemployment register in the Katowice voivodship listed 63,400 people, representing an unemployment rate of 3.4% (compared to a national rate of 6.1%). The unemployment rate peaked in 1993–1994 at 10.1%, still far below the national average (see Table 2).

The unemployment rate remains relatively low, although the absolute number of the unemployed remains the highest in Poland. The registered unemployed usually have a low education level, having only completed primary or vocational schools (lower than secondary education). In 1995, only 2.6% of all unemployed in the voivodship were university graduates, while 46.5% had completed only primary school, 27.0% only vocational school, and 23.8% secondary education.

The unemployed have access to various forms of assistance provided by specialised institutions. Passive measures are dominant, however, rather than active labour market policies. In 1990–1995, unemployment benefits, social insurance contributions and prepayment of income tax amounted to 81–82% of total unemployment spending. The unemploy-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As of 31 December</th>
<th>Persons unemployed in Katowice</th>
<th>Unemployment rate in Katowice (%)</th>
<th>National unemployment rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>63,000</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>116,300</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>148,300</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>172,000</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>172,200</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>151,400</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Unemployment benefit amounts to 36% of average salary, and one is entitled to receive this assistance if one had a job for a minimum of six months before losing employment. As of 1 September 1996, the unemployment benefit amounted to PLN 291.6 (approximately USD 105). In cases of mass dismissals, the benefit equals at least 75% of the lowest salary. After twelve months, the right to obtain the benefit is lost. Of the 172,200 total registered unemployed persons in the voivodship, 71,000 lost their unemployment benefit in 1994, while another 50,300 of the total of 151,400 lost their benefit in 1995.

Active labour market policies include job intermediation, labour exchanges, training and retraining of the unemployed, loans, public works and intervention employment. Funds for those purposes are distributed by the Labour Fund, yet their share in the total amount spent to help the unemployed does not exceed 20%. In 1994, intervention employment reached 3153 persons, rising to 3806 in 1995. The numbers of people engaged in public works projects also rose from 1200 persons in 1994 to 1600 in 1995. As few as 150 loans for small business start-ups were extended in 1995, plus another 50 for creating additional jobs in private enterprises that already existed.

The negative, albeit often necessary, phenomena connected with transformation were accompanied by numerous positive developments. Since early 1990, the Katowice voivodship has boasted a substantial – by Polish standards – inflow of foreign capital. The number of joint ventures registered in the voivodship rose steadily, from 686 on 31 December 1992, to 1501 in 1995. Most important, however, is that the socialist economy of shortages was replaced by an economy with sufficient supply of goods and services, accompanied by the disappearance of queues in shops and service-providing workshops. Between 1990 and 1995, the number of registered private automobiles increased from 616,500 to 780,100, and the number of telephones almost doubled, from 265,800 to 502,600. Throughout the period 1990–1996, the proportion of national industrial production accounted for by the voivodship remained high (15–17%), as did its participation in GNP generation (11–12%).

The average salary in the voivodship is still relatively high, second only to Warsaw according to official statistics. The Katowice voivodship also remains one of the most important scientific centres, both in terms of the number of university teachers and of students. The location of the voivodship is of advantage, being close to the Czech and Slovak borders and crossed by trans-European routes. It also has at its disposal a dense –

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10 The breakdown of joint ventures registered by year is as follows: 686 in 1992; 998 in 1993; 1267 in 1994; and 1501 in 1995.
although quickly decapitalising – technical and social infrastructure. Finally, the voivodship may boast an important and also symbolic investment by General Motors, located in the Special Economic Zone established in Gliwice by the Council of Ministers in July 1996. Thus, one may speak of some relatively well-developed and multidimensional advantages of the region.

Apart from this, the environmental situation of the voivodship has not experienced further dramatic deterioration since late 1991, and has even notably improved in some aspects, such as in dust emission. The partial slow-down of environmental degradation has been linked to three factors. First, a serious recession is still underway in environmentally unfriendly heavy industry, with lower production levels and consequently less pollution. Second, growth in pro-ecological investments and technological modernisation can be observed. And third, a more severe system of penalties for damaging the environment has been introduced, coupled with greater opportunities for enforcement.

3. SCENARIOS AND PROGRAMMES FOR RESTRUCTURING IN THE KATOWICE VOIVODSHIP

3.1. Introduction

The key problems of restructuring in the Katowice voivodship are inevitably connected with the radical reduction of employment in heavy industry, particularly in mining. Coal mining employs more people in Upper Silesia than the whole mining sector in Western Europe, and the regional iron and steel industry still applies old technologies long since abandoned in the European Union. In 1989–1995 the production of coal dropped by 32%, while employment directly connected with coal production declined by only 15%. Further reductions in output seem to have already been decided upon. Cautious estimates prepared in 1995 by researchers from the Central Mining Institute in Katowice indicate that by the year 2000, there will be some 122,300 fewer jobs in the mining sector, with another reduction of 42,600 jobs by the year 2010. Employment in mining would then amount to 132,100 compared to its March 1996 level.

11 As of 31 March 1996, the hard coal mining industry employed 263,388 people. The reduction in employment per saldo since 1989 amounts to some 141,000 people, mainly administrative support (eg women employed in offices).

of 263,400. Estimations prepared by the State Agency for Hard Coal in Katowice are more optimistic, predicting a loss of 72,000 employees by 2000, and approximately another 25,000 in the following decade. This would leave employment in the mining sector at around 200,000 by the year 2010.

3.2. The Markowski plan: Radically reforming the mining sector, or evading the real issues?

Substantially different solutions are included in the programme for the restructuring of mining in the years 1996–2000 prepared by deputy minister of industry Jerzy Markowski and approved by the Council of Ministers on 30 April 1996. This document anticipates that 52,000 employees will have retired by the year 2000. Another 12,000 will have been sent on “paid holiday” or, as an alternative, will have received early retirement. Both these solutions will guarantee the effected persons 55% of their salary. Some 14,000 miners should find employment with enterprises established as a result of the privatisation or commercialisation of portions of the mining industry, while a further 2000 people should, with the help of preferential loans, go into self-employment. Coal output is expected to drop by 20 million tonnes, whereas yearly production per employee should increase from 500 to 615 tonnes. In the approved document, the notion of a “coal fee” (3.7% per tonne) for the purpose of industry restructuring, suggested in earlier draft versions, was abandoned. The document assumes that the price of coal within the country will exceed costs, while exports will remain subsidised. As a result of the programme, hard coal mining is expected to break even beginning in 1998, and from the year 2000 it should generate a profit.

The projected changes require, in the opinion of the author of the project, substantial expenditures as well as external support. Direct support (PLN 5.26 billion) would cover:

• subsidies for the partial payment of social insurance arrears, mainly due from closed-down mines (PLN 298 million);

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13 The industry owns some 160,000 flats, and their maintenance has a substantial negative impact on profitability. However, the transfer of such a huge amount of property out of the industry would mean generating an extraordinary balance sheet loss, roughly equaling the total capital of the mining companies. The Trade Code would then require the companies to declare insolvency. Hence, the Markowski plan includes an increase in the capital stock of those companies by over PLN 1 billion.
• subsidies for clean-up of environmental damages, mainly those caused by mines in liquidation (PLN 126.7 million);
• subsidies for the costs of liquidation of mines and social protection of their employees (PLN 3.15 billion);
• subsidies for technological restructuring and the creation of new jobs (PLN 1.7 billion).

Indirect support would cover:
• government guarantees for investment loans (PLN 816.0 million);
• funds from loans by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank (amount not precisely defined);
• increase of the capital stock of coal companies, in order to transfer flats out of the mining industry (PLN 1.0 billion).

The document has many weaknesses. There is no definition of mining reform mechanisms which would guarantee proper use of the enormous sums involved and secure the lasting profitability of the industry. It contains no precise register of the mines which are consistently unprofitable and to be liquidated, and it suggests merging profitable mines with unprofitable ones, making the former bear the costs of such mergers. Also the plan accepts the idea of substantial subsidies for the export of coal. The notion that, instead of continuing investment in mining, part of the support funds could be used to create alternative labour markets and centres for the retraining of miners is rejected a priori.

Last but not least, the plan reflects a sectoral approach to the restructuring process, when a trans-sectoral approach is urgently required. Reducing employment in mining causes a domino effect in connected industries such as services, construction and metallurgy. On the basis of restructuring experiences in the Ruhr Coal Basin or in Nord Pais de Calais, it is estimated that one job in mining generates three more outside mining. Restructuring will also directly influence the fate of the 88 service units related to mining, which employ some 80,000 people (eg in health services, administration of flats, or recreation centres belonging to mines). Nor can one ignore the effects that the closure of mines will have on traditional patriarchal Silesian families. Over 1 million people are connected with hard coal mining, either professionally or through family. In traditional workers’ families the father has usually been the single breadwinner,

\[14\] Women’s chances on the regional or local labour market were seriously limited by their inadequate level of education and the exceptionally limited number of jobs addressed particularly to women. One may assume that the traditionally high level of professional activity among women in, for example, the Žódź region became one of the elements of its economic dynamism, whereas lack of such activity in the Katowice voivodship may prove to be a serious obstacle in the restructuring process.
supporting all the members of the family. Compounding the problem is that the mines are concentrated within a small territory (the Rybnik-Jastrzębie region), where the labour market is very modest and unable to absorb redundancies. The town of Czory offers a good illustration. Two large enterprises provide employment for its 70,000 inhabitants: the Czory coal mine, under liquidation, and the bankrupt plant for pre-fabricated building units. The restructuring situation in the region is critical and may have a dramatic ending.

On the other hand, there are some positive features to the Markowski plan – one of which is the fact that it appeared at all. Some others include the suggestion to reduce employment and the number of “social jobs”; the demand to reduce coal production, simultaneously increasing productivity; the call to remove those elements of property which are not directly connected with coal production (eg the 160,000 flats); and the rejection of the idea of mass redundancies in favour of more natural and voluntary ways of leaving employment.

Trade unionists from the Solidarity union are critical of the Markowski plan. An alternative restructuring scenario, prepared by Marek Kempski, the regional leader of Solidarity, requires that a few basic conditions be fulfilled:

- the restructuring of the mining industry must be connected with the restructuring of the entire economy of the Katowice voivodship;
- funds must be guaranteed for that purpose;
- policy in the power and energy industries in Poland must be revised;
- the restructuring programme must have a parallel social policy;
- the programme should be designed by the whole government, not by a deputy-minister of industry. A first step in constructing the restructuring programme should be – in the opinion of Mr Kempski – a coal summit, the outcome of which would be the signing of an agreement “for the good of Polish coal”. The participants should come from the Ministries of Labour, Industry, Finance,

Transport and the Environment. Regional partners should also be represented by trade unions, local governments and economic circles. “Our intention”, stated the trade union leader during a meeting with Mr Markowski in Ustroń on 18 May 1996, “is that the implementation of the programme be socially supervised. This will allow immediate reaction to conflicts which may arise.”

The proposal by the trade union leader, although interesting some respects, is based on a few inadmissible and unclear assumptions. Very important is the source of its final authorisation and the financial means at its command. It does not define the desired direction for the revision of policy in the power and energy industries, the amount of money necessary for the restructuring of the mining industry, or sources for its financing. The suggested summit could therefore turn into yet another tower of Babel, in which every participant would speak his or her own language. This could mean a waste of time and initiative, as well as social mobilisation. The most serious mistake is the total disregard for the participation and engagement of the voivodship’s inhabitants, employees in the industry, local governments, and managers of mines and coal companies. The times of statist omnipotence are over, and today only synergetic efforts by the regional community, supported by external aid, can bring about meaningful results.

In the meantime, in spite of all the restructuring plans developed for the industry, in the consciousness of society at large the position of hard coal mining is still privileged. This was confirmed in recent research on a representative sample of 1100 inhabitants of the Katowice voivodship carried out in April 1996 by the Workshop for Social Studies. Participants in the survey were asked: “Should a portion of the miners be made redundant in order to reduce the costs of producing coal?” As many as 65% of the participants responded negatively, with only 24% agreeing with the implied suggestion. Of those questioned, 75% stated that more money should be made available for the modernisation of the mining industry, while 75% disagreed with the suggestion of selling mines to foreign investors. A 68% majority expressed the opinion that mining requires state intervention and strong support, as it is unable to undertake restructuring on its own. This trend in answers to the survey questions confirms the patronising and protective approach of regional community to the mining industry, as well as the conviction that it has a stable position in the economy of the state and the voivodship. A new attitude revealed by the study was a growing approval for the liquidation of mines which are constantly unprofitable (56% yes; 32% no; 12% don’t know).

The implementation of the Markowski plan as regards employment, both in the mining industry specifically and in heavy industry generally, requires the cooperation of a host of institutions and the undertaking of numerous tasks, including:
Restructuring and Employment in Katowice

3.3. The Regional Contract: A guarantee for regional restructuring, or an attempt to maintain “political silence”?

In the first half of 1995, representatives of socio-political, professional, local government and economic circles in the region prepared a document entitled the Regional Contract for the Katowice Voivodship (KR). This contract – “estimated to last at least 20 years” – is composed of three complementary parts. First is a Regional Social Pact (RUS), which contains a joint declaration to cooperate in a Programme for the Restructuring and Development of the Upper Silesia and Zagłębie Region. The RUS is dated 24 May 1995, and was signed in Katowice on 6 June 1995 by the Local Parliament of Self-Governments of the Katowice Voivodship, the Upper Silesian Economic Society, the Regional Economic Board, the Regional Economic Chamber, the Regional Solidarity Trade Union, the Federation of Communes of Upper Silesia and Northern Moravia, the All-Polish Association of Trade Unions, the Upper Silesian Union, as well as representatives of numerous other institutions.

The second part of the KR – the Region-Government Agreement – contains a list of the major activities for reform in the region. This part of the document also indicates how certain basic activities should be carried out and how to measure their results. The signatories of the KR agreed that among the strategic areas which must be transformed for the success of regional restructuring are: education, social security, environment (public infrastructure, spatial organisation and protection of the natural environ-
Regional Development and Employment Policy

Part three of the KR is entitled Comments to the Regional Contract, and is a supplement to the first and second parts of the document. It contains more detailed explanations of strategic actions to be taken by the co-signatories of the KR. There are three main parties participating in the KR and its implementation. First are entities from the voivodship – eg communes, large economic enterprises, steel works, mines, coal companies, important regional institutions, federations, foundations, and chambers of commerce and industry. The second group which is party to the KR is the centre – mainly central government, its agencies and other centralised institutions. The third party of the KR will be, in the future, supra-national entities, mainly the European Union with its various outlets and agencies.

The projected structure for implementing the KR is to have a form of public-legal agreement between representatives of the region and the central government. The construction of the KR allows for annual renegotiation of agreements between the government and representatives of the region. In mid-June 1995, having analysed the wording of the KR, Prime Minister Józef Oleksy ordered his subordinates from strategically important ministries – mainly Education, Finance, and Industry – to enter into negotiations with representatives of the region, to be concluded by the end of August 1995.

One can venture to say that the “regional” party expects a stream of money, as large as possible, to be directed to the voivodship, which would allow restructuring processes to seriously begin. It also aims to introduce indispensable changes in legislation, as well as maximum concessions from the centre to allow the co-signatories of the KR to act. The “centre” party, from its own perspective, having but modest reserves in the budget and bearing in mind the poverty of the state as a whole, aims to restrict the financial provisions, agreeing, at least verbally, to the necessary changes in law and guaranteeing the permission to undertake agreed activities.

The KR is clearly a vital document, addressing as priorities the problems of Upper Silesian coal mines and communities of miners. However, heavy industry in general and mining in particular are, in the opinion of the present authors, approached in an overly superficial and timid manner in the KR. One could even get the impression that the co-signatories demonstrate a certain escapism by attempting to avoid the most important problem, the restructuring of heavy industry.

The overly general treatment of mining and its social environment provokes a few thoughts. The authors of the KR, which is an otherwise interesting and important attempt to create a new economic and social order in Upper Silesia, were in this point short on imagination and sensitivity.
Undoubtedly, the proposals included in various places of the KR also cover – although without specification – the problems of mining. Yet the problems experienced by that sector should entitle it to separate and privileged treatment. One cannot exclude the possibility that the inadequate treatment of the problems of mining is a manifestation of an attempt to maintain silence on this matter. Any attempt at unequivocal and determined reform (e.g., closure of unprofitable mines) results in social tensions and brings about conflicts and political clashes, which threaten both the regional and central establishment. It is therefore easier to implement only safe, cosmetic changes rather than radical ones designed to diminish the long-term social and economic costs.

3.4. The Special Economic Zones: General Motors in the Katowice voivodship

One of the basic assumptions of the Regional Contract, in the chapter entitled “Economy”, concerned three Special Economic Zones created on the basis of a Law passed on 20 October 1994. Four sub-zones – established by the Council of Ministers on 18 June 1996 – together comprise an area of 827 hectares. Each investor founding an enterprise there employing at least 100 people, or investing at least ECU 2 million, will be exempted from income tax payments for a period of ten years. Companies not allowed the tax exemptions the zones provide pay 40% income tax according to Polish law. The following may not be manufactured in the zones: explosives, arms and weapons, ammunition, alcohol, tobacco or cigarettes, or fuel for engines. Preferences will be given to manufacturers of office machinery and computers, metal construction elements, food products, soft drinks, electronic parts, medical instruments and equipment, optical and other precision instruments, and clocks and watches. The optimistic calculations prepared by the Upper Silesian Agency for Promotion and Development project that by the year 2001, between 42,800 and 48,600 new jobs may be created in the Special Economic Zones.

General Motors will invest at least USD 300 million in the construction of a modern automotive factory, which will employ 2000 people. On 1 October 1996, the construction of the main building of the factory was begun. As of September 1996, the interest expressed in the zones was substantial and the investments declared were estimated to amount to the aggregate figure of USD 1 billion, including producers of windows, air conditioning for cars, as well as subcontractors of GM. A more profound assessment of the results of the functioning of the Special Economic Zones will be possible only in subsequent years. Hope can be expressed,
however, that the zones will not share the fate of the Mielec zone in 1995, which was poorly used and did not attract enough investment.

4. REGIONAL POLICY OF RESTRUCTURING: SUGGESTED ACTIONS

4.1. Introduction

This section contains sketches of necessary restructuring programmes for the Katowice voivodship, including a list of basic restructuring activities (the “decalogue of restructuring”), as well as suggestions for indispensable actions aimed at partial liquidation of unprofitable and inefficient mining and metallurgical enterprises. Education also receives due attention, in the context of the inadequate education capital of the inhabitants of the voivodship. Those neglected in the social processes of restructuring are pointed out (e.g., housewives not engaging in paid employment), and finally the role of local and regional elites in constructing a restructuring policy will be discussed.

It is worthwhile here to underline the need to consider the consequences of long-term development. A region is, after all, both a territorial and socio-cultural unit, in which long-term historic processes and secular trends find their expression. The region in question is in fact still feeling the results of the chaotic urbanisation and industrialisation of the 19th and earlier part of the 20th century. For many years, Upper Silesia will have to bear the consequences of the policy of overexploitation of natural resources and of wasteful management of the economy, but this pattern was by no means begun in communist Poland—it had been going on for almost two centuries. The project of restructuring the production system must consider this historical perspective, and cannot be based on the illusive belief that a transformation of industry can be accomplished in a short period of time.

4.2. The “decalogue of restructuring”

The many years of concentration on traditional industries and the unwise use of natural resources in the Katowice voivodship should now be offset by activities aimed at revaluation and deglomeration. On the eve of the third millennium, the following should, in our opinion, be considered as strategic aims for the development of the region:

1. Stimulation of the region’s economy, on the basis of a network of innovative enterprises, aided by business incubators, enterprise promotion
centres, centres of information and initiative, and technological and scientific parks. The success of such undertakings depends largely on the amount of (foreign) capital and loans engaged in the restructuring process;

2. Radical reform of state industry, particularly mining, in order that it may become a source of primary accumulation;

3. Privatisation of a substantial portion of the large and medium-sized industrial enterprises owned by the state;

4. Serious transformation of the production system and a substantial increase of the number of employees in services. This process is to consist of retraining part of the regional labour force and moving it from industry to traditional services and – to the extent possible – modern services;

5. Creation of institutional possibilities for the retraining of the labour force, and assistance in starting a second career;

6. Guaranteeing basic social care for the unemployed and their families, who have been affected by the changes connected with the necessary restructuring of traditional industries;

7. Establishing competitive political, financial, and technological elites in the region and its localities;

8. Restoration of the cultural identity of the region;

9. Tidying of the urban space and architecture of the region;

10. Cleaning up the environment of the voivodship.

When constructing plans for the restructuring of the voivodship and defining its main purposes, the successes of the most advanced or developed countries and regions in Europe cannot be neglected. The most developed countries and regions of Europe have entered a stage labelled as post-industrial, whereas Poland in general and the Katowice voivodship in particular are still in the industrial stage. Institutions symbolising this stage are, for example, industrial enterprises, mines, and foundries. In contrast, the main feature of the post-industrial society is the domination of the service sector. What is meant here are not only services in the traditional sense (trade, home and repair services, transport, recreation, health services) but also – and most importantly – modern services (such as in business, banking, scientific research, information technology, or telecommunications).

In post-industrial countries, employment in the broadly defined service sector accounts for some 70–80% of total employment. In the Katowice voivodship, on the other hand, it amounted to only 37% in 1994, underlining the scale of deformity of the employment structure. This is also clearly unfavourable in comparison with the rest of Poland. In 1993, the share of employment in services in Poland amounted to 48%, while in the Warsaw agglomeration it reached 60%, in Gdańsk 54%, and 51% in
Poznań, Kraków, and Wrocław. In contrast, more than half of all employees of the voivodship are employed in industry, and the majority of these work in the mining, metallurgy, or chemical industries. It is important, then, to convince regional and local communities of the necessity for radical tertiarisation of the economy – that is, of a radical increase of employment in services. This will not be easy, particularly in the wake of the long years of manipulative pedagogy and the existing conviction of the “mission of the working class in large-scale industry”. In all, the logic of development through heavy industry still dominates in the region.

4.3. Development by collapse?

In successful examples of restructuring in Europe and all over the world, three basic variants (ideal versions) of the process can be identified:

- restructuring through definitive and planned liquidation of certain traditional industries (e.g., mining, metallurgy) and development of alternative, promising industries, particularly in the service sector;
- restructuring through modernisation of certain traditional industries and their adaptation to world market conditions;
- restructuring through partial liquidation of traditional industries, partial modernisation, and the development of alternative and promising sectors of the economy, especially the service sector and innovative industries.

It is indispensable to carefully select the most advantageous restructuring strategy for the Katowice voivodship, based on practicality, desirability and respective costs and benefits. Each variant is theoretically and practically possible, and each has been used for reconstructing traditional industrial regions elsewhere, to varying degrees. The variant of complete collapse through liquidation of entire industries should not be disregarded, as it was recently used in economic restructuring of the new fed-

\[\text{\textsuperscript{18}}\text{J. Czapiński: “Społeczne koszty transformacji: Makropsychologiczny dowód, że pieniędzie to nie wszystko” [Social costs of transformation: Macropsychological proof that money is not everything], Czasopismo Psychologiczne [The Psychological Magazine], Vol. 1, No 1–2, 1995, 33–54.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{19}}\text{Ibid.}\]
eral states of Germany, and also to a certain degree in the Łódź voivodship.

In any case, the restructuring of Upper Silesia, a region based on traditional industries, requires the mobilisation and cooperation of numerous partners in various fields and on various levels. First, it is necessary for the central government to be prepared in a political, practical, and financial sense for the process. This must be supplemented by conceptual, financial and organisational readiness of the regional establishment: local governments, management of enterprises undergoing restructuring, and trade unions. Finally, the psychological readiness of employees and members of their families is crucial, both as groups and as individuals, to accept the approaching changes. None of these conditions has been completely fulfilled yet, and regional trade unions strongly resist radical yet indispensable reforms. They reject all forms of group redundancies, reductions of subsidies, and rapid liquidation of unprofitable mines.

4.4. Learning without limits: In praise of education and of new individualism

At the end of 1995, Warsaw University psychologist Janusz Czapiński published an extensive study devoted to the social costs of transformation in Poland. This study states explicitly that education alleviates the individual costs of transformation, because the most educated people live longer than others, suffer less frequently from depression, earn more, and suffer only infrequently from feelings of hopelessness. According to Czapiński:

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21 In the school year 1990–1991, the distribution of secondary school students was as follows: lower vocational schools 52%; secondary vocational schools 29%; secondary schools providing general education 18%.


23 We use the adjective new purposefully, to distinguish from the individualism of classical liberalism. In the case of classical individualism, man was perceived rather in one dimension, mainly as homo economicus; in the new individualism, man is treated as a multidimensional being, having more than simply economic needs and aspirations, eg also cultural, religious, societal, political, etc.
“In 1994, people with university education had more than twice the income of people with primary education, and 50% more than people with only secondary education. Also, the psychological costs of ill-adaptation (feelings of hopelessness and symptoms of depression) in the years 1991-1994 were connected with the level of education.”

One can also state that the success of long-term undertakings in restructuring (modernisation) in the Katowice voivodship depends to a large extent on the transformation of the education system in the region. It seems, however, that the present education system, despite numerous positive changes, still indirectly favours the marginalisation of the region, strengthening its peripheral character. This is because the curricula are dominated by obsolete knowledge specific to mining and heavy industry. Among those who entered secondary education in 1994–1995, the dominating group consisted of students in lower vocational schools (36%) and secondary vocational schools (38%). Together they outnumber by nearly three times those who entered general secondary education (26%). Although these proportions are changing, the tempo of these changes is still far from satisfying.

Research on education in Poland by Zbigniew Kwieciński shows the level of educational competence in youths to be low. In the second half of the 1980s, 17% of children graduating from Polish primary schools could be considered functionally illiterate, while 40% were substantially excluded from understanding symbolic culture. According to Kwieciński: “The level of functioning of the public schools is, and will be for a long time, a stigma decisive for the fate of the present young generation, preventing them from being self-conscious, and obstructing social development.”

The radical prognosis also holds true for the Katowice voivodship. The restructuring of the region cannot be carried out by functionally illiterate people, people with low educational capital who are excluded from participation in symbolic culture. The success of the restructuring process as well as its tempo and character will depend mainly on people of good education and modern personality, who have been shaped by an institutionally reformed

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Among the most important characteristic features representing the ideal type of modern personality and new individualism are the following: a developed drive for success; non-conformity; openness to new experiences; readiness to consciously accept change; an ability to gather information and to use knowledge at hand in activities undertaken; an ability to plan personal, family and public affairs; a high opinion for technical abilities facilitating the use of new equipment and technology; basic understanding of the logic of production processes and principles of decision making; high educational and professional aspirations; awareness of and respect for the dignity of others; an abandonment of fatalism and predestination; orientation towards the future; liberal and/or democratic personality; and caring for one’s health.
regional system of education with new, adapted educational programmes. One of the main functions of such a system, apart from teaching students, will be socialising and bringing them up in such a way that will establish and strengthen the qualities of modern personality within the voivodship. Individuals are and will remain an important, if not the most crucial, subject for restructuring. It is hoped that a reformed education system will be capable of training students to become people we could label as “new individuals”, with modern personality. This view is built upon the conviction that the forces which drive change are ultimately located within individuals – individuals constantly ignored under real socialism. One can even say that the success of restructuring depends largely upon an “outbreak” of new individualism.

Restructuring – regardless of its substance and character – is a lengthy process, possibly taking some 15–25 years. Its main burden will rest upon the young people presently graduating from primary schools or studying in secondary schools and universities. Investing in their education and developing individual educational capital should be seen as direct or indirect financing for the restructuring of the region. Reform of regional education should, from the very beginning, be aligned with restructuring plans and undertakings, adjusting it to the prospective demands of transformation in the voivodship. School superintendents, educational authorities and their local representatives should be informed about long- and short-term restructuring plans and about the envisaged structure of employment and demand for professions. Also, it is absolutely necessary to rapidly sever the education structure from the extrapolated employment trends in traditional industries.

Central, regional, and local authorities should share the conviction that investing in the system of education in the Katowice voivodship essentially means investing in the future of the region. Without their financial, conceptual, and organisational support, the process of change in the education system will be slow and inadequate, and restructuring plans will not be possible to implement. This has been demonstrated by the experience of countries and regions which have succeeded in introducing modernisation, especially in countries such as Japan and South Korea, or in regions like the Ruhr and Saar coal basins. In each of those states or regions, strong financial support to education played a privileged role in restructuring strategy.

4.5. Restructuring: Leading actors, family and mass media

As has already been discussed, success will be possible for the restructuring programme only with the formation of a group of “new individualists” or “modern personalities”. This should by no means
consist only of technocrats and managers, but also highly qualified workers, technicians, and engineers. The family, in particular, functions as a key socialising institution, preparing new generations for social life, influencing the accepted patterns of professional and social mobility, as well as shared systems of values and norms. It is important, then, that it does not maintain and support values which in modern circumstances may be considered outdated. We mean here particularly the discontinuation of the tradition of inheriting jobs such as miner, metallurgist or coke plant worker, mythologised under real socialism. This discontinuation should be complemented by a simultaneous popularisation of a new ethos of labour, based on a traditional respect for work, yet including new patterns of career and promotion, connected with the latest technologies and equipment, scientific research, and so on.

Those who organise changes in the production system should also consider the fact that within a traditional family of miners or metallurgists, a particular role belongs to the housewife. She is usually the manager of the family, the dispenser of money, the one responsible for consumer decisions of a household, the one who organises life, and thus will not remain indifferent to the process of modernisation (restructuring). Housewives, no less than their working husbands, should be informed about the tendencies, conditions, and consequences of the modernisation process. Here, regional and local mass media can play a particularly important role, interpreting the sense of the restructuring principles in the voivodship, town, rural commune, or even individual enterprises.

Mobilisation for restructuring may, at least to a certain degree, be taken over by institutions which organise neighbours or people within a district, and by local associations and organisations. Numerous successful restructuring projects started with social consolidation around the idea of regional and local communities counting only on themselves (under such slogans as: “Let’s help ourselves, and then the banks and heaven itself will help us”).

4.6. Restructuring the Katowice voivodship: Beneficiaries and malcontents.

From sociological studies, we know that success in large-scale transformation depends largely upon a positive approach by both individuals and social groups. What is particularly important here is that the main actors – regional and local communities, as well as individuals – are aware of the indispensability of change. Passive or active resistance to
change is manifested most of all by individuals or social groups for whom modernisation appears to be a threat and a source of discomfort. As a result, in Katowice the contesting groups consist on the one hand of people of with low qualifications connected with the old-fashioned production and extractive industries, and on the other hand of the managers of these enterprises, who were rewarded in a special way – both financially and with prestige – under real socialism.

Employees and local communities should not be surprised by the consequences of restructuring activities, and must be properly prepared for them. Restructuring should not – and cannot, if it is to function properly – be associated with existential threats. On the contrary, its purpose is to create new perspectives in life, which depend on individual efforts. Meanwhile, mistakes in information policy and a lack of clear programmes and restructuring principles result in an association of the process with two phenomena that are viewed in the Katowice voivodship as fundamental disasters: the closing down of mines or foundries (the “benefactresses”), and unemployment. A badly-prepared campaign on the shut-down of enterprises which are harmful to the environment or unprofitable can cause deep and dangerous frustrations among employees of the firms in question. This has been made all too clear in recent examples of individual or group behaviour of the affected workers, many of whom can hardly imagine the possibilities of retraining or of entering into independent economic activities. One should not underestimate the overpowering fears of employees facing further consequences of unpopular reforms. Information on modernising the production system, the conditions of such modernisation, and its importance for the employees themselves, their families, and their community should be spread as quickly as possible, in a straightforward and clear manner. Otherwise, rebelling groups of employees may become clients of radical political parties and forces.

4.7. The regional political arrangement: Combatants of power

A particularly important task at the initial stage of the restructuring process is the reconstruction of the political system and its structures. The rise of new elites is of great importance. Although spectacular changes have taken place in the voivodship, the former elites still have strong decision-making power in managing and running the region. It seems the rotation of regional political elites and the reduction of real socialist management mechanisms should be carried out in two stages. The first of these is the urgent further reduction of regional red tape in politics and the economy. This bureaucracy is mainly linked with the min-
The second stage of creating new political elites would be to reduce the role of the industrial mining-metallurgical lobby, restoring it to its proper dimensions. That lobby should be deprived of the ability to set the region’s development goals and to redistribute resources in its own favour. The main factor, besides existing legal and institutional restrictions, working against the creation of alternative elites is the meagreness of potential groups for recruitment as such elites. Many active and capable individuals already joined the bureaucratic elites in past decades. However, in some localities the formation new elites has already begun. The main institutions around which such groups are formed are the new political parties on the one hand, and Solidarity, other trade unions and church organisations on the other.

A decisive elimination of the practice of making the natural and social environment pay most of the costs of the functioning of enterprises is a particularly important task facing the new elites. The enterprises in question are particularly the coal mines that abuse natural resources and which do not offer sufficient compensation for the damage they cause. The elimination of this practice, however, requires clearer regulations at the central and industry level. These regulations should guarantee efficient use of funds and goods to be used for the repair of environmental and social damage caused by industrial activities.

4.8. The regional cultural arrangement in the process of restructuring

The main source of the Silesean cultural identity, as consolidated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was the labour ethos of its workers. This was strengthened over time by the deep relations of the native people with Catholicism, local priests and institutions of the church. The feeling of ethnic separation also had its importance, along with the forms of social consciousness and national identity typical for a border community. Additionally, the cultural identity was strengthened by a high level of identification as part of a wider family and a very advanced degree of self-organising (eg in choirs, local societies, unions, etc.).

Among the most important items constituting this indebtedness were social insurance, PLN 1.3 billion; loans from banks, PLN 1.5 billion; deliveries and services, PLN 1.3 billion; taxes, PLN 0.6 billion.
Respect for tradition in the regional community does not mean idealisation of tradition, or refraining from criticism of it. Some elements of tradition cannot be reconciled with the planned process of restructuring – for example, beliefs in the pro-development role of extractive industries, the duplication in new generations of education patterns at only the vocational level, and the inheritance of professional traditions. In fact, only the “positive core” of tradition should be preserved, as one of the sources of cultural identity.

5. CONCLUSION

Avoiding decisive actions aimed to change the face and character of the Katowice voivodship, or improper execution of those actions, may have serious consequences. First of all, it would contribute to the escalation of social and political tensions in the region, which might later spill over to other parts of the country. Let us be reminded here that at the end of May 1995, not long before the fifteenth anniversary of the historic agreements signed in Gdańsk, Szczecin, and Jastrzębie in 1980, there were clashes between miners from the Silesia-Zagłębie Solidarity trade unions and the police in front of the buildings of the Council of Ministers in Warsaw. Those were the first – although perhaps not the last – manifestations of that calibre of growing rebellion and cumulated frustration. If the accumulating problems of the voivodship and its industry continue to be put off, repeated actions of this kind will be inevitable.

Two months later, on 28 July 1995, the State Agency for Hard Coal in Katowice published its Report on the Economic Situation of Mining. Between January and the end of June of that year, the mines produced 67 million tonnes of coal, of which 63 million were sold. Per saldo, the mining industry had losses 74% higher than in the same period of 1994. Aggregate net losses amounted to PLN 659 million, and were continuing to grow. In this problematic situation, coal companies demanded an immediate increase in the price of coal.

This difficult situation, which resulted in social conflict, reveals that the Regional Contract (the KR), an otherwise very important and unprecedented document, largely neglects the real problems faced by the mining industry. The facts are that as of 31 December 1995, the aggregated indebtedness of the industry amounted to PLN 8.1 billion, while receivables stood at PLN 2.9 billion, creating a negative balance of PLN 5.2 billion and growing. In April 1996, the hard coal mining industry increased its financial loss for the first quarter of the year by 27%, with the aggregate loss for the first four months of the year amounting to PLN 297 million. Further negligence of the real changes in mining and underestimation of the “mining problem” in the annual renegotiations of the KR may