

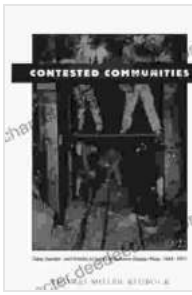
# **Contested Communities: Class Gender And Politics In Chile S El Teniente Copper Mine 1904 1951 (Comparative And International Working Class History)**

The El Teniente copper mine in Chile was one of the largest and most important copper mines in the world during the early 20th century. The mine was a major source of wealth for Chile and played a significant role in the country's economic and political development. However, the mine also had a dark side. It was a place of extreme exploitation and oppression, where workers were subjected to dangerous working conditions, low wages, and brutal treatment.

This article explores the complex relationship between class, gender, and politics at El Teniente during the period 1904-1951. The article argues that the mine was a microcosm of Chilean society, reflecting the deep social and political divisions that existed in the country at the time. The article also shows how the mine was a site of resistance and struggle, where workers fought to improve their working conditions and their lives.

## **The El Teniente Copper Mine**

The El Teniente copper mine is located in the Andes Mountains of central Chile. The mine was first discovered in the 16th century, but it was not until the early 20th century that it became a major source of copper. In 1904, the mine was acquired by the Braden Copper Company, a subsidiary of the Kennecott Copper Corporation. Under Braden's ownership, El Teniente became one of the largest and most modern copper mines in the world.



## Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile's El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951 (Comparative and international working-class history)

by Thomas Miller Klubock

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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The mine employed thousands of workers, most of whom were poor peasants from the surrounding countryside. The workers were subjected to dangerous working conditions, low wages, and brutal treatment. They worked long hours in dark, cramped mineshafts, using primitive tools and equipment. The mine was also plagued by accidents, and many workers were killed or injured each year.

In addition to the physical dangers of the mine, the workers also faced economic exploitation. The wages were low, and the workers were often forced to work overtime without pay. They also had to pay for their own food and housing, which was often overpriced and inadequate.

The workers' living conditions were also deplorable. They lived in crowded, unsanitary shacks, and they had little access to healthcare or education. The mine was a breeding ground for disease, and many workers died from preventable illnesses.

## **Class and Gender at El Teniente**

The El Teniente copper mine was a deeply divided society. The workers were at the bottom of the social hierarchy, while the mine owners and managers were at the top. The workers were mostly poor peasants, while the owners and managers were wealthy elites. The workers were also mostly men, while the owners and managers were mostly women.

The gender division at El Teniente was reflected in the way that the workers were treated. The men were subjected to the most dangerous and difficult work, while the women were given the less dangerous and more menial tasks. The men were also paid more than the women, and they were more likely to be promoted to positions of authority.

The gender division at El Teniente was also reinforced by the company's policies. The company provided housing for its workers, but the housing was segregated by gender. The men lived in barracks, while the women lived in dormitories. The company also provided food for its workers, but the food was different for men and women. The men were given more meat and other high-calorie foods, while the women were given less.

The gender division at El Teniente had a profound impact on the lives of the workers. The men were more likely to be injured or killed on the job, and they were more likely to suffer from chronic health problems. The women were more likely to be victims of sexual harassment and assault, and they were more likely to be fired from their jobs.

## **Politics at El Teniente**

The El Teniente copper mine was a major source of wealth for Chile, and it played a significant role in the country's political development. The mine

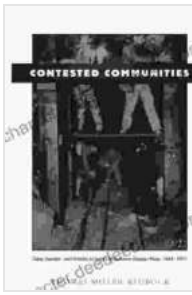
was a major source of campaign contributions for both the Conservative and Liberal parties, and it was often used by the government to control the labor movement.

The workers at El Teniente were often politically active, and they sometimes organized strikes and protests to demand better working conditions and wages. However, the government often responded to these protests with violence. In 1907, the government sent troops to break up a strike at El Teniente, and several workers were killed.

In 1920, the workers at El Teniente went on a general strike to demand higher wages and better working conditions. The strike lasted for several months, and it eventually forced the company to negotiate with the workers. The strike was a victory for the workers, and it helped to raise awareness of the working conditions at El Teniente.

The El Teniente copper mine was a microcosm of Chilean society, reflecting the deep social and political divisions that existed in the country during the early 20th century. The mine was a place of extreme exploitation and oppression, where workers were subjected to dangerous working conditions, low wages, and brutal treatment. The workers at El Teniente fought back against these conditions, and they sometimes organized strikes and protests to demand better working conditions and wages. However, the government often responded to these protests with violence.

The El Teniente copper mine is a reminder of the struggles that workers have faced throughout history. It is a reminder that the fight for workers' rights is a long and difficult one, but it is a fight that is worth fighting.

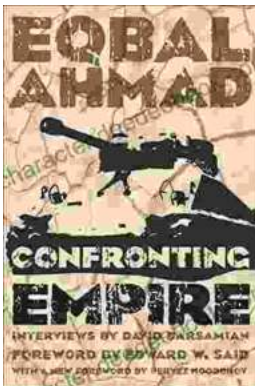


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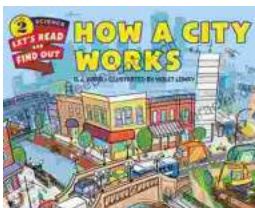
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