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THE VILLAGE - THE CITY; BRIDGES AND BARRIERS

When undertaking an attempt to characterize the city-village relation that now takes place in contemporary Poland, first of all, one has to determine the objective parameters of the scene where the phenomena and processes which are of interest to us appear. On one hand there are 30 000 villages inhabited by 40% of the population, on the other - 812 settlement units which formally possess the status of a city and which are inhabited by the majority of the Polish population. Yet over half of the cities (445) consists of small towns below 10 000 inhabitants. There are only 39 large in terms of Polish conditions cities of over a 100 thousand inhabitants.

The existence of an enormous variety of conditions in terms of the genesis, historical records, forms of activity and functions is characteristic of both the villages and cities alike. The geographical differences are not without their own influence as far as the differentia specifica of each settlement unit is concerned.

The features mentioned above of the total assemblage of Polish cities and villages allow us to state that all our attempts in this article to deliberate, reflect upon, and to reach conclusions have to be carried out at a considerable degree of generalization. Beyond this threshold there exists a sphere of detailed inquiries, an aim which can be achieved through empirical examination of specific cases or their limited groups. The possibility of meeting the demands of representation seems to be very limited. Indeed, even the city-village relation registered at the level of particular cases or even their representative groups would have been only a more or less appropriate illustration of phenomena and general regularities.

Thus adopting, out of a choice, the macro-scale for the needs of future deliberations, one needs to stress that for better presentation it is convenient to assign the city-village relation to several levels where they can be perceived more sharply. The division of these relations to several levels will bring in effect an impression of inconsistency, an impression of inconsequences present in reality itself - and that will belong to the sphere of regularities and conclusions.

In the most basic model, three basic levels can be most readily differentiated: political, economic-productive, and social-cultural. In reality it would have been difficult to isolate these levels empirically since we are to account for phenomena and processes which are determined in multiple ways, which exert on themselves a mutual influence, and which often extend over each other.

The basic period of time which was taken into consideration was the time of the forty years which had passed since the end of the Second World War. In the general opinion it is not a homogeneous period. Quite to the contrary, at each particular level, not only within the range of problems here in question, we become aware of different scenes which manifest the multiple turns and changes not only in the sphere of officially formulated directions and assumptions of the policy itself, but also in more or less efficient activities which aim at realizing the policy.

The political level in the city-village relation had not been, in the period taken into consideration, equally active and spectacular. The only major moment which from time to time at this level absorbed the attention of the society in general was the equivocal position of the peasant agriculture in a system which assumed a common social ownership of means of production. The common means of production in the city establish the premises which allow us to consider the city the main active cell in creating the socialist reality. From the point of view of doctrines, the village remains in opposition to the anticipated social order as a relict of relationships seemingly capitalistic, but probably though, closer to conditions of feudalism at the stage of transforming to early capitalism.

On the basis of these considerations, it was accepted that the relationships between the villages and the cities are of a

symbiotic character, though at this point we do not intend to evaluate them. Nevertheless, it is beyond doubt that in terms of establishing the principles of the political system, the power of decision belongs to the city - a centre of government rule. In the postwar period in the range of decision-making activities dealing with the city-village relations one can differentiate a series of "soft" and "hard" steps of a policy concerning the village.

From a historical point of view, as a form of the "soft" steps one should consider the agricultural reform, the first decree of the newly founded socialist government in 1944. The agricultural reform by liquidating the larger and very large land estates had thus provided to the thousands of farm workers and peasants on considerably small farming areas the status of owners of medium-sized farms, devoting only a part of the land estates to the establishment of state-owned farms. The next are all "hard" steps which took place at the end of the forties and the beginning of the fifties, and which include the establishment of obligatory supplies of farm products for the needs of the recovering after the war society and state economy. At the same time a class partition of the village was stimulated from the top by discriminating relatively large peasant farms and by gaining political allies amongst the rest of the peasants. These activities are accompanied by a practical liquidation of a formed in the past system of independent village institutions and organizations mainly of an economic character. These were substituted by agencies of a centralized, quasi-cooperative apparatus which was steered from the top, and which was interested mostly in collecting from the peasants the obligatory farm products and livestock. Further "hard" steps aimed at compulsory collectivisation of peasant farms at forming cooperatives in place of individual farms, all in the atmosphere which could by no means be recognized as enthusiastic as far as the farmers themselves were concerned.

An apotheosis in the mass means of propaganda of the urbanization and industrialization of the whole country corresponds with the presented here somewhat simplified version of the policy toward the peasant village. It is related with ambitious plans to rebuild the destructions caused by war and to develop the industry, mainly the heavy industry, as a basis of a radical change

of the structure of the Polish economy formulated in the first postwar plans of economic development (the 3-year and 6-year plans). The realization of plans to construct the heavy industry together with the development of mining industry, mainly of coal and iron ore, was to secure a basis for the industry producing means of production for the factories which would satisfy the needs of the consumers in the socialist future. The developing industry and growing mines created a need for a work force - in those times even unqualified - and that began the great migration movements from the village to the city which last - although in a different form and range - till this day.

The political crisis of the mid-fifties brought about a series of less bold and spectacular "soft" steps. First of all it brought a retreat from plans of cooperatives collectivisation of peasant farms with real possibilities for farmers to return to the private ownership status quo ante. It is accompanied by a spontaneous and in general approved partial reconstruction of peasant production and economic organizations. The peasant village begins a process of reconstructing and developing its production possibilities both in farming and raising livestock. This process leads to a characteristic economic and production dissection of the village - the larger to the size and as far as production is concerned the more vigorous farms, start to bring significant and socially visible profits. The smallfarm majority develops at a considerably lower pace and is not as successful. This process with its unavoidable successes and failures lasts till today.

Coming back to the late fifties, one should name among subsequent "soft" steps the gradual retreat from compulsory supplies of farm products, thus creating the possibility of a larger participation of market prices acting as both stimuli and factors regulating the directions of agricultural production. This also took place as a result of the existence of a growing system of determined by contracts crop and livestock supplies - a system beneficial to many farmers. Yet in the sixties and seventies a number of "hard" steps are also undertaken. They are less spectacular and are often accompanied by multiple declarations of a "green light" for the village and agriculture. Nevertheless independent activities of peasant economic institutions are limited

again by a system of centralized management. One has to admit, though that the economic and production activities of the agencies of the macrosystem bring definite profits and satisfy some needs of the village though to a much smaller degree than expected.

The village itself is not devoid of its own inner anxieties, These were expressed through the reactions to the latest social and economic crisis. The peasant village achieved through it a record in the constitution of the Polish People's Republic guaranteeing the stability and inviolability of the peasant family farmland. That does not by any means signify that the dogmatic and ideological discussions that centre around the phenomenon of Polish peasant farming have come to an end, stabilizing at this level the symbiotic city-village relations.

At the political level the village is seen as a not very expedient though at this point indispensable element of the macrostructure - indispensable both for historical and more immediate contemporary reasons. In the second case, the village is the provider of irreplaceable material values indispensable for the maintenance of the general social entirety in a state of dynamic balance. The establishment of this state of balance had been, years ago, the condition of bringing Poland out of the postwar devastation, of proceeding onto the path of economic changes. It is still a constant condition of recovering from the depression of consecutive postwar economic and social crises. Thus at the political level the village is for the city a provider of essential consumption goods and a working force. On the other hand, it appears as an indispensable customer whose reaction to the offered values is not that of demand, but rather a desire for the preservation of the state of possession. This, of course refers to the ideological offers which intend to regulate the production-agrarian conditions from the point of view of their concordance with the ideological demands of the system.

As we have mentioned earlier, at the economic and production level the existence of the village constitutes the condition of a relative self-sufficiency in terms of basic food supply for the society. On the other hand, it is a constant source for the recruitment of a working force for the needs of the industry and the city - the making of contemporary urban proletariat. Without

such a role of the village it would have been difficult to formulate and execute plans which aim at transforming Poland from a country of an agricultural profile of a relatively not very high agricultural level into a modern nation where the development of industry is seen as a sine qua non condition of building the socialist system - the prospect of a better tomorrow.

The attractiveness of city modes of work and style of living, visions of industrial development were all formulated not only as factors setting conditions for the general social development and prosperity, but also as a boost for the life careers of individuals. A specific reaction of a significant part of the village population to the programme of nation-wide development which satisfied both objective and subjective needs, gave beginning to great pro-city migration movements which changed the demographic structure of Poland. The numbers themselves illustrate the point: over 60% of the population before the war and 40% today. The pro-municipal migration movements lead to local disruptions in the demographic structure thus creating in the nearest future a potential danger for many peasant farms where the farmers today now reach a postproductive age and do not possess successors. Another sign of the present effects of the migration movements is the lack of wives for young farmers as a result of migration of young women to the city.

The banners of peasant army divisions taking part in the uprising against Russian tzarist rule occupying a part of Poland in 1794 carried the slogan: "Żywią i bronią", i.e. "To Feed and Defend". In the name of that same idea peasants participated in the struggle to achieve independence in the years of the 19th century servitude and also in wars for independence in the 20th century. A paraphrase of that same slogan could illustrate the village-city relations at the economic and production level at a time of forming the socialist political system: "To Feed and Build..." And that, of course, meant building cities!

A synthetic presentation of the city-village relation at the social-cultural level generates particular difficulties due to the abundance and plurality of directions of the phenomena.

The first years after the Second World War were shaped by the events described earlier: agrarian reform, compulsory supplies of farm products, finally - a trial "forced" collectivisa-

tion of peasant agriculture. The situation of the village itself as far as production was concerned did not differ from the one before the war, though the destruction and heavy losses brought by war demanded from the peasants greater efforts and brought smaller profits. The only obvious beneficial change was the sponsored by the state and partially financed by the peasants electrification of the whole country. It did not proceed without both objective and also subjective difficulties, as a result of a not always mature consciousness and a lack of practical readiness of the village itself. In the initial period it was not consumed to a great degree due to a lack of adequate farming appliances and equipment. It had more of a political rather than functional character and in the eyes of the villagers it did not recompensate the immediate burdens both of production and livelihood and the feeling of being endangered by the uncertainty of the prospects for peasant agriculture.

A great number of young village migrates oftenwise in an atmosphere of pionéer enlistment and of a great personal adventure struggled for an access to the urban proletariat. The case of rebuilding the devastated by the Natzi occupation capital city - Warsaw, or the construction of enormous industrial investments like Nowa Huta next to Cracow are all examples of the truthfulness of the second part of the slogan described earlier in this article "To Feed and to Build". The success of the great construction site which was in reality the whole of Poland and which struggled to industrialize and rebuild the ruins of cities, would not have been possible if not for the participation of the village mass migration movement. One cannot forget at this point that the worker had to work, too, in order to be able to live. The fundamental difference between the old pro-city migration in the 19th and beginning of 20th century connected with the formation on Polish land of industrial capitalism, and the migration of the last forty years is to be explained in the following way: the factors encouraging the over-abundant force to leave the village were connected with the existence of poverty and a lack of prospects for livelihood. The cities of those days being in the process of industrialization attracted with their chance for a better life. The migration of those days was a means of escaping into the unknown - the only alternative to growing poverty and village retardation.

One has to distinguish here between the local migrations and migrations abroad to the West and to North and South America. The intention of the latter was usually to accumulate savings for the purpose of returning to homeland. The economic aim of these migrations was first of all the desire to enlarge the farmland. The migrations to the city within the country were most often connected with a final decision of building a new city existence without prospects of returning back to the village. Just to the contrary - the migrants would often "burn the boats" behind them, often expressing the desire to discard even external features of a humiliating rural character. The success was measured by the ability to acquire the external features and lifestyle of a city inhabitant thus melting without trace into the urban proletariat. The birth and maturity of a class consciousness in the urban proletariat, resulting in an organized struggle for a better tomorrow, gave the peasants a feeling of a social promotion.

The forces driving contemporary migrations from the village to the city seem to be more varied: the feeling of insecurity as far as the future of the village is concerned, the status of the village as of the inconvenient ideological and political "relict" from the past, the technological and political difficulties of peasant farming on one hand, and on the other the awareness shaped by propaganda of a chance to participate in the construction of a modern better tomorrow for the whole society, and added to it all, the mirage of a city attractiveness whose positive stereotype functions in the common consciousness as if based on the allegations of the classics of urban sociologists.

The ideological-pioneer considerations seemed to lose with time their primary significance together with the phase of romantic enthusiasm of the first years of reconstruction after the war. In the first years of infrastructural and consumer goods shortages, the city presented itself and still attracts as a place of easier living, thus withstanding in popular estimations the competition of the growing in wealth and progress village.

In comparison to the situations which took place in the past, the attitude of the emigrants towards the native rural milieu and towards their own peasant descent has changed fundamentally as a result of multiple varied reasons. First of all, one should stress the fact that in the new political-social system in

postwar Poland individuals of a peasant and working class descent were assured a preferential starting position in different areas of social advancement. One of the examples is the conferment of special "preferential" points to young people of a peasant and working class descent at entrance exams at universities. In this case the measure is motivated by a need to even out the objective educational and local social differences. The existence of this new instrumental characteristic of the peasant (and working class) descent and its influence on shaping the lives of individuals to a great extent relieved the peasant emigrants from the once humiliating stigma of rurality. One has to admit, though, that the deeply rooted in the past in the cities attitudes of "petit-bourgeois" (lower middle class) through which the new-comers from villages were often appraised as potential competitors to the urban work market and to other urban facilities have not extinguished till this day. Today, though, they function to a lesser degree as far as the work market is concerned whose needs in the new system are hardly ever satisfied. The feeling of a fear of competition manifested by contemporary urbanites does not presently concern only the constant new-comers from the village. In fact not the new-comers themselves, but rather the native inhabitants of contemporary villages who make ample use of the urban facilities and services arouse from time to time reactions of animosity. One needs to add that the peasant customers of contemporary cities come from that category of peasants who having achieved an economic success as a result of farming and raising livestock, now constitute for the urbanites a competitive purchasing power of consumer goods.

The progressing for thirty years - regardless of periods of fluctuation and regression - economic advancement of the village, brings about a new group of factors connecting the ex-migrates with their rural families. They become for the new urbanites a source of multiple material and existential benefits.

Finally, one needs to discuss one more group of factors shaping the city-village relation at the social and cultural level. It is a process of influencing the mass recipient with elements of folk rural culture. It began in the mid-fifties and one cannot underestimate here the role played by the State Folk Ensemble "Mazowsze" and "Cepelia" - the Cooperative of Artistic and

Folk Craftsmanship. Each of these in their own way and not without some stylization promoted on the consumers' market of the whole society elements of traditional folk culture. This creative activity of "Mazowsze" or later "Śląsk" and other quasi-regional or authentic regional ensembles encountered a nation-wide demand for confirming a national identity and a need for establishing the genesis of the majority of the society. This social spontaneous confirmation of a Polish nationality was not sufficiently assisted by a selective national culture born out of the nobiliary culture, accepted and cultivated by the urban intelligentsia. In the process discussed above the two directions of culture - selective and folk - created a complementary entirety which could only be embraced by individuals.

The objects and decorations from "Cepelia" appeared in interiors of both a private and public use as permanent elements of indoor designs, reaching cities with a wave of fashion which made use of those elements of the rural style which did not bring to mind the inferiority complex and retardation of the village. It is interesting that the "Cepelia" decorations reach through a "secondary cycle" the homes of peasants who live according to contemporary city fashions.

From the point of view of the city-village relation one cannot dismiss one more source which in the social consciousness, mainly though in the urban consciousness, shapes the stereotype of a village and of rurality. That source is the so-called "rural theme" found in contemporary Polish literature and also on the scenes of theatres and in many Polish films.

Among the generally accepted by literary criticism works of literature we may find short stories and epics, novels and works endowed with a specific poetic art - and also works of a definite satirical-humorous character. Simplifying matters to some extent, if we were to find a common characteristic of these works written by different authors and composed in various literary styles, from the point of view of a sociologist one could arrive at a following conclusion: literature dealing with postwar reality emphasizes, first of all, the exotic character of the village in the form of a social-spacial-material milieu. The other structure that this Polish village exotism could refer to is the more mature in terms of advances of civilization urbanity with all its

positive and negative aspects. Both the exotic rurality - standing in opposition to the civilized urbanity - as well as the urbanity itself could be expressed by fixed classical dychotomic model statements: "Urbanism as a way of life" on one hand, and "folk society" on the other. That does not signify that the literature is charged with the objection of abstracting from reality. Nevertheless, independent of depicted conditions of reality, the reader will unconsciously form an image of a village stereotype whose model traditional features determine human fate and dramatic experiences, and often make us laugh at the anecdote which expresses the exotic distinctness of rurality as compared to urbanity.

What is worth stressing, this literature gravitates around fixed also in stereotypes two basic features of the Polish peasants - their specific dignity and inferiority complex resulting from a historically determined position in society.

Finally it is high time to conclude these deliberations by coming back to the expressions comprised in the title: "bridges and barriers". Once again one has to state that it is difficult to meet the condition of separating the conclusions, what in fact seems to be suggested by the title. But then, oftenwise, that which connects cities and villages at the same time comprises elements in conflict and contradictory causes. A good example is that of the consumers' goods market - though, of course, there could be many more examples.

Objectively what without doubt unites the whole Polish nation is, contrary to stereotypes and a faulty consciousness, its rural descent. Rural in this case does signify only peasant. One could make use of the example of the genealogy of Polish intelligentsia - once for the greater part derived from nobility, today - mostly from the advancement of peasants to the city. Thus what lays the bridge between the city and village are the common roots. The common descent of the whole Polish nation attained after the war a special dimension. After the tragedy and drama of the Nazi occupation the Polish nation, having suffered heavy losses in terms of human lives, remained on its native land alone, without the historic partnership of minorities different in terms of an ethnic background, culture, and religion.

The growing insignificance of the inferiority complex among urbanites of a peasant descent opens new prospects of creating subjective symbiotic attitudes.

Another supporting element of the bridge is the discussed earlier dominant role of cities, centres of government rule. But the subjects exercising power are again in a significant part children of peasants, often too ostentatiously displaying their city skin.

In the area of government rule the city-village relations are, of course, non-symmetrical. The contacts of authorities centered in cities with their village partners are carried out through the graded system of institutions and organizations. In the context of these relations, it is worthwhile to come back once again to the old slogan discussed earlier in the text: "To Feed and Defend". The original second part of the slogan constitutes another element of the bridge. The village through its role in the macrosystem, though often perceived as non-univocal and controversial, after all, in our conditions, does defend the unity and stability of the People's Republic. One could hardly imagine a sovereign existence of the nation and state without this great part of the entirety.

Another bridge is, without doubt, the mass culture whose universal model is directed toward the whole nation. This does not signify that one cannot in this and other fields note the disparity of the village in relation to the city. Nevertheless a certain unification of existential systems with a different degree of their possible fulfillment is also observed. An important role in this area is played by the large in number category of peasant workers - a live bridge between villages and cities and another indispensable element in the functioning of the entirety.

Summing up the elements of the barriers disrupting the harmonious city-village relations, one needs to bring up several of the problems discussed earlier. The factors of greatest influence are the ambiguities and variabilities of concepts concerning village and agricultural advancement desired from the point of view of the basic norms of the system on one hand, and from the point of view of the interests of specific social groups on the other. Another barrier is the inadequacy or ra-

ther incompleteness of planned actions concerning the village and agriculture steered from the position of the macrostructure. This is connected with the smaller as when compared to the possibilities of the city chance of articulating the interests of the village by the dominant in number category of its inhabitants - peasants.

From another point of view one needs to admit that during the years that this article is concerned with, one can observe a definite preference in meeting the requirements of the city. This is connected with the special role assigned to industrialization and urbanization in the process of building socialism. These processes, though, could not have been realized if not for the "construction" contribution of the village and agriculture - a contribution sensu stricto and sensu largo!

The question that arises in view of these considerations is whether and to what degree the characteristic for Poland bridges and barriers between the city and village reflect the specifics of the determined place and time, and to what degree are they an illustration of processes taking place at a significantly larger or even world-wide scale? The answer would have required a great deal of comparative studies...

Finally, one should sum up these deliberations with a statement on simplifications and generalizations found in this text. Our intention, though, was not to solve complicated problems, but to encourage further studies, discussions and polemics.

Wacław Piotrowski

WIEŚ - MIASTO; POMOSTY I BARIERY

Omawiając relacje miasto-wieś we współczesnych warunkach polskich należy mieć na uwadze indywidualne odmienności konkretnych przypadków, wynikające z właściwej Polsce różnorodności typów miast i wsi.

Odrzucając teoretyczne ramy podkreślające wzajemnie opozycyjną dychotomiczność, rozważa się możliwość ujmowania miast i wsi jako symbiotycznych układów partnerskich.

Rozważa się relacje miasto-wieś na płaszczyznach: polityczno-

-ustrojowej, ekonomiczno-produkcyjnej i społeczno-kulturowej. Wprawdzie miasto - jako siedlisko władzy i decyzji - na każdej płaszczyźnie niejako narzuca wsi swoją wolę i oczekiwania, to jednak z perspektywy czterdziestu kilku lat PRL wieś jawi się jako element w makrostrukturze nieodzowny ważący zasadniczo na realizacji programu socjalistycznej industrializacji i budowy zurbanizowanego społeczeństwa.

Głównym pomostem łączącym miasta z wsiami jest generalnie wiejskie pochodzenie narodu polskiego, ponadto udział podmiotów pochodzenia chłopskiego w "miejskim" sprawowaniu władzy, kultura masowa z modelem konsumpcji w zasadzie jednolitym dla całego społeczeństwa.

Bariera między miastem a wsią to przede wszystkim zmienność i niejasność koncepcji przeobrażania wsi i rolnictwa, pożądanych z punktu widzenia modelu ustrojowego. Dalej brak konsekwencji w realizacji planowanych działań na rzecz wsi i rolnictwa. Wreszcie niesymetryczna w stosunku do możliwości miasta szansa artykulacji interesów wiejskich przez chłopów.

The "contribution" of the village to the construction of a socialist society and state is a contribution seen from a different angle. The question that arises in view of these considerations is whether and to what extent the characteristics for Polish villages and barriers between the city and village reflect the specific of the historical place and time, and to what extent are they an illustration of processes taking place at a specifically larger or even world-wide scale? The answer would have required a great deal of comparative studies. Finally, one should see in these considerations with a view to an identification and generalization found in this text. The intention, though, was not to solve complicated problems but to encourage further studies, discussions and debates.

WIEŚ - MIASTO, POWIĄZANIE I BARIERY

W tym miejscu należy przede wszystkim zwrócić uwagę na zmienność i niejasność koncepcji przeobrażania wsi i rolnictwa, pożądanych z punktu widzenia modelu ustrojowego. Dalej brak konsekwencji w realizacji planowanych działań na rzecz wsi i rolnictwa. Wreszcie niesymetryczna w stosunku do możliwości miasta szansa artykulacji interesów wiejskich przez chłopów.