

REPORT ON THE DISCUSSION

All papers were presented within three subject groups, and the discussion proceeded along similar lines. The presentation of all papers from a given subject group was followed by the discussion on problems touched upon in the papers.

The discussion on problems within the subject group "Urban Policy and Planning" included the question of usefulness of comparative studies concerning both economic systems. There was drawn attention to a low effectiveness of the planning system in Poland in comparison with Great Britain (T. Olszewski). It was stated that the essence of this difference did not lie in socio-political solutions adopted by both countries, but rather in resources for implementation of plans remaining at their disposal. The most significant problem here is a low level of per capita GDP in Poland, and quite considerable impoverishment of exchange relations (function of money) shaped by politicians and not by objective economic laws. Certain favourable changes in this respect have been initiated by the economic reform. It can be expected that the effectiveness of the planning system will be improved. An important role in growth of material production is also played by social attitudes. However, the process of changes in the social awareness is by its very nature a long-term process and, hence, changes in this sphere cannot be expected immediately.

There was also analyzed the system of grants (P. Bury) for the local authorities in Western Europe. The main attention was focussed here on economic bases of these grants and interrelationships between grants and revenues of the local authorities in Great Britain.

Theoretical studies, as it was said (J. Regulski), allow at least theoretically to borrow certain solutions and make some attempts at generalizations on the basis of observations. In

practice, however, the first possibility cannot be accepted. The financial system in Great Britain, for example, reflects the socio-political relations in this country, its entire cultural heritage and the economic reality. Consequently, it does not lend itself for application in any other country. The same refers to the situation of Poland. On the other hand, certain elements of these systems can be compared with due regard to their specific characteristics.

It is also difficult to compare urban development processes. The level of urbanization in Great Britain was reached much earlier than in Poland, and at an entirely different stage in development of scientific thought, social awareness and technology. Accordingly, a whole set of factors affecting this process cannot be repeated. An additional factor hampering comparative studies on urban development planning is the impact of differences in socio-political systems. Nonetheless, there are numerous common elements of objective character.

While considering other possibilities of joint research areas, there were listed among others problems in the sphere of employment policy (H. Mortimer-Szymczak). An object of such comparisons could be employment in big industrial agglomerations, professional activity of women, problems of the labour market. It was stated (E.G. Cherry) that usefulness of comparative studies did not necessarily mean direct application of borrowed solutions but utilization of different experience. Such studies are primarily of cognitive value.

The discussion on the papers belonging to the subject group "Labour Market and Employment Policy" was focussed on problems of the labour market. Supplementing the range of problems presented in the papers, there was characterized (B. Smith) the functioning of the informal labour market in Great Britain and its impact on the economy. It is estimated, for example, that about 10 per cent of people in the working age do not declare their full incomes for taxation. This results from the necessity of hiding one's employment in connection with collecting unemployment dole or additional place of work. Such phenomenon is quite common among immigrants and ethnic minorities. One of

solutions allowing to curb the "black" labour market would be to permit a definite income without suspending the right to collect unemployment dole.

The original cause of the existence of the informal labour market is big unemployment. The situation could be alleviated, to some extent, among others by prolonging duration of schooling, earlier retirement, giving preference in employment to persons being jobless for the longest time. Unemployment encompasses different segments of the labour market, not only young people, immigrants and women but also those employed in the key sectors of the national economy, e.g. miners.

The labour market in Great Britain is also characterized with disproportions in territorial distribution of jobs. The spatial mobility of the work force is restricted by social, cultural and economic factors. In this situation, the Labour Exchange controlled by the government may be only a source of information.

It was also pointed out (T. Olszewski) that the situation faced by the work force may result in social unrest. In order to prevent it the government undertakes many measures in the socio-welfare and economic spheres. For the time being, difficulties and disturbances in the labour market do not produce any major dislocations (E.G. Cherry).

The discussion in the third subject group "Urban Fringe and Agricultural Production. Housing and Urban Services" dealt mainly with problems connected with the planning of urban growth. More specifically, such problems as effectiveness of planning and activities of the local authorities connected with spatial development of urban areas received more attention (J. Regulski, E.G. Cherry, S. Stanghellini). Among others, there was discussed the problem of unauthorized building in towns and suburban zones in Great Britain and Italy. This uncontrolled process appears to be a major factor undermining effectiveness of the spatial development planning, and it creates difficulties with ensuring access to the technical and social infrastructure for unlawful building. Under pressure of the already effected changes, town planners are forced to accept and legalize unauthorized building.

Such unlawful building encompasses not only housing construction but also other forms of construction (industry, services, etc.). This gives rise to the problem of preserving protective green belts for towns. In Great Britain, attempts have been made since 1947 to prevent liquidation of the green belt and the urban fringe by applying legislative solutions. The right to inherit land guaranteed by legal regulations from the forties does not imply freedom in building. The local authorities are able to control activities of private owners of protective zones by means of financial instruments.

Instances of unlawful building in suburban zones have been also recorded in Poland. The local authorities and the planning organs adopt numerous measures allowing to control this process.

In the course of the discussion, there was also touched the problem of private housing construction in Poland. Its significance has been enhanced in recent years due to a very difficult housing situation. A system of legal and economic incentives has been created to promote this form of building, however, the main barrier to it continues to be shortage of developed sites and building materials. Health considerations and shortening of the period during which a family must wait for a flat are among the main advantages of this form of building.

While summing up the discussion, attention was drawn to mutual benefits resulting from the possibility of presenting the results of the participants' studies and discussing many different problems. There were also briefly outlined the problems which emerged in the course of the discussion and from the presented papers, and which could provide a starting point for further joint studies and contacts.

