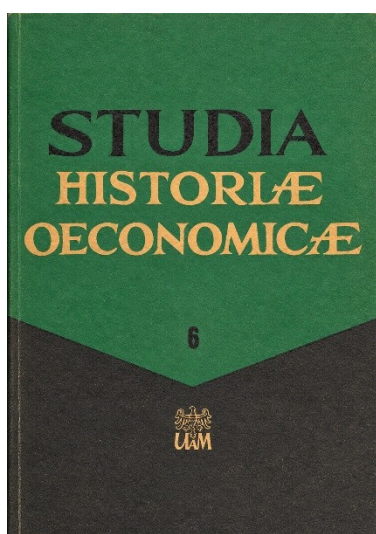




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PECULIARITIES OF THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE
OF EASTERN WHITE RUSSIA
IN THE SIXTEENTH — EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

I

Arriving at a synthetical image of the socio-economic structure of territories situated east of Elbe river, territories in which the corvée-manorial system developed, requires still many detailed researches. Only such researches would make it possible to differentiate properly the particular regions from the point of view of their specific economic features. Some of those regions are better known, some still wait for proper investigation. Eastern White Russia belongs to the latter. Her developmental peculiarities were but marginally treated in synthetical publications¹ and nearly completely omitted in literature on the subject of a monograph type².

The problem of the manor based on serf labour is in the foreground of the specific socio-economic features of the countries situated east of the Elbe river.

In the territory of Eastern White Russia, in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries the feudal land-owners' own farm (the manor based on serf labour) developed too, but when compared to the territories of Lithuania, Poland and even Western White Russia it was characterized by certain peculiar features of its own. The development of that manor was influenced by factors operating in all other regions, such as the pattern of land-ownership, the charac-

¹ Literature on the subject of the agrarian history of White Russia in the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries was listed in my book *Dobra szklowskie na Białorusi wschodniej w XVII i XVIII w.*, Warsaw 1969 (The Szklów Estates in Eastern White Russia in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries), pp. 152 - 57. To the subject discussed in the present article may be referred such publications as those of M. K. Lubawski, M. W. Downar-Zapolski (1892 - 1927), K. Kernażycki (1929 - 31), S. Kościakowski (1914), D. L. Pochilewicz (1951 - 66) and H. Łowmiański (1935 - 67) and of his disciples: J. Ochmański, S. Alexandrowicz, J. Morzy and also of White Russian historians: V. I. Meleshkho, A. P. Gritskevitch, Z. J. Khapiski, P. G. Khozlovski.

² The problems of the region of Eastern White Russia were discussed by I. Baranowski (1914) and the results of his researches were utilized by W. Conze (1940) and J. Rutkowski. Recently the subject is dealt with by V. I. Meleshkho.

ter of the market and the conditions of reaching the market. The rise of the manor was directly connected with the economic activities of the gentry seeking to raise their incomes which in turn was concomittant with the development of monetary-commodity economy. The serf labour which made it easier to the feudal land-owners to produce marketable grain was transformed into money in the commodity exchange market. Special conditions had to exist to make that transaction profitable to the feudal land-owner and above all there had to exist an easily accessible market for selling the grain for a proper price.

Eastern White Russia, i.e. that part of White Russia which is in the central Dnieper basin, occupying the very outskirts of the multi-national Polish state, was located far away from the Baltic ports, the export outlets. Apart from that, those were regions in which the peasant farm was in comparatively good condition. That was connected with the process of direct transition from the system of independent peasant farms, which were subjected only to the hospodar, to a system of huge magnates' latifundial estates and starostships, resulting from the economic policies of the Jagiellonian dynasty. Peasant farms, characterized by big apportionments for those times, made payments in kind and in money. In order to earn money the peasants cultivated apart from grains such crops as hemp (in great quantities), for which there was a great demand in foreign markets as well as in the home market and which became the main export item supplied by the villages of Eastern White Russia³. The light weigh of the thread and seed of hemp (as compared to grain) made transport to the Baltic sea ports easier.

One of the most characteristic features of the socio-economic structure of Eastern White Russia was the retardation of the execution of the *włóka* reform. Surveying was continued there mainly in the first half of the seventeenth century and even in the first half of the eighteenth century. There were areas, such as e.g. the Czersk starostship, where land was counted in the traditional 'service' (*slużby*) method. In the process of surveying and reform, in connection with the lack of tendency of developing their own grain economy on the part of the feudal land-owners (hemp cultivation was too labour absorbing), there were no new manors organized, in the number stipulated by law and, in fact, some manors were liquidated. This can be exemplified be the liquidation of a part of the manors in the first half of the seventeenth century in the Mohylew *ekonomia*, manors which were organized as a result of the *włóka* reform⁴. Attempts at introducing manorial economy in private

³ Cf. E. Dunsdorfs, *Der Aussenhandel Rigas im 17 Jh.*, Conventus Primus historicorum balticorum, Rigae 1938, pp. 466 - 8.

⁴ В. И. Мелешко, *Особенности развития аграрных отношений в Восточной Белоруссии XVI - XVII вв.*, Тезисы докладов и сообщений 7 сессии симпозиума по аграрной истории Восточной Европы, Кишинев 1964, стр. 104.

estates ended in a similar way. That means that the land-owners, often in possession of many manorial estates producing marketable crops in other territories of Poland (the Sieniawski, Sapieha, Radziwiłł and Czartoryski families) did not find it necessary to introduce economy based on serfdom in order to obtain higher profits in their latifundial estates and starostships located in Eastern White Russia. Big land-owners with the king at their head (he was the owner of the Mohylew *ekonomia*) made the characteristic landmark of the land-ownership system of Eastern White Russia. One must note, however, that the small gentry who held land on lease from the magnates or was given for life-time or for free-hold small estates within those latifundial possessions, actually developed manorial economy, because the production of those small estates was governed largely by the owner's role as a direct consumer.

The weak development of manors in Eastern White Russia thus can be shown not to have resulted from a low economic level of that region. The opinion of researchers is here to be understood as referring to Southern regions which were very sparsely populated, i.e. to the Mozyr and Rzecznica counties (c. 3.5 and 1.5 person per square kilometer). This is, however, contradicted by the Orsza county (c. 20.2 person per square kilometer)⁵, a county which was characterized by a dense urban network. One could say that all-in-all the territories of Eastern White Russia, retaining the features of the archaic rural social system, were remarkably differentiated in their socio-economic structure and pattern. There were side by side regions characterized by real backwardness and regions superior in their economy based on the commodity and money relations to other territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. These were at the same time the regions which had recovered more speedily from the destruction of the seventeenth-century wars. The Orsza county was one of the better developed regions. It was second only to the Upita county in its density of population in the middle of the seventeenth century and thus was also second on the list in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Both home market and foreign trade developed in that county in an equal measure. The towns of the Orsza county were situated upon an important inland trade route connecting Eastern and Western Europe after the ultimate decline of Novgorod (1570)⁶.

⁵ J. Morzy, *Kryzys demograficzny na Litwie i Białorusi w połowie XVII w.* (The Demographic Crisis in Lithuania and White Russia in the Middle of the Seventeenth Century), Poznań 1965, table 16.

⁶ Cf. H. Łowmiański, *Handel Mohylewa w XVI w.* (Mohylew Trade in the Sixteenth Century), *Studia historyczne ku czci S. Kutrzeby*, Vol. 2, Cracow 1938, pp. 517 - 47; by the same author: *Struktura społeczno-gospodarcza Mohylewa w czasach pomiaru włóczęj* (The Socio-Economic Structure of Mohylew in the Times of the *Włóka* Survey), *Rocznik Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, Vol. 8, 1939, pp. 38 - 41.

II

It seems that a more detailed study of the socio-economic structure of that developing region threw some light upon the specific features of Eastern White Russia, a region of our interest. This would pertain in particular to the economically active regions. The analysis was based upon rich seventeenth and eighteenth-century materials (100 manuscripts), mainly inventories and accounts from the Czartoryski Library, Cracow. Those manuscripts pertain to a large magnate estate group in the Orsza county, centered round the powerful trade centre of Szklów. The Szklów latifundium comprised c. 1,080 square kilometers and belonged to the magnate Gasztowd and Chodkiewicz families, after 1626 it was taken over on the distaff side by the Sieniawski family and after 1739 it became in the same way the ownership of the Czartoryski family. After the first partition of Poland in the years 1774 - 78 those estates were bought by Empress Catherine the Great ⁷.

The whole of the latifundium situated in a lowland country-side consisted of two territorial complexes divided by the Dnieper. In the seventeenth century there were within that latifundium 160 villages, the Szklów town and the little towns of Zubrewicze and Aleksandria. As a result of war destruction 15 villages disappeared in the eighteenth century and their lands were incorporated into those of the neighbouring villages.

In 1650 the population of the Szklów county was 46 thousand and the Szklów town had a population of 8,500 ⁸. The inventories of the second half of the seventeenth century demonstrate a considerable fall of population. As late as at the end of the seventeenth century the population comprised only 33 per cent of the pre-war figure. It was as late as at the half of the eighteenth century that the number of population returned to its pre-war figure and the population of the town increased by c. 38 per cent ⁹. The density of

⁷ П. Жукович, *Сословный состав населения Западной России в царствование Екатерины II*, Журнал Министерства Народного Просвещения, Петербург 1915, з. 1 стр. 90. It must be added that in the years 1772 - 1778 the annual incomes of the Szklów estates belonged to August Czartoryski.

⁸ Data arrived at on the basis of the inventory of that year (The Czartoryski Library, subsequently referred to as CL, rkp. gosp. 1519 IV), which makes it possible to estimate the index of 7 persons for each homestead (*дym*).

⁹ The conclusion is not supported by the data concerning the number of homesteads from the inventories which are actually not adequate with the numbers of farms in the middle of the seventeenth century. The number of population estimated on their basis was much higher. This is confirmed, among other things, by the fact that landless peasants were not accounted for by the inventories (they constituted in 1775/76 c. 2.3 per cent of the village rents) and by the divergencies between the population census of Szklów (11,821 inhabitants in 1773/74.: П. Жукович, *Сословный состав*, стр. 90), with data arrived at on the basis of inventories (above 8,000 persons).

population in that region was considerable and comprised 37 persons per square kilometer.

In the social structure of the Szklów estates the peasants constituted from 70–80 per cent, burghers 20–28 per cent and the gentry and clergy 1–1.5 per cent.

The area of land was composed of village grounds and the lands owned or used by the town of Szklów and the other towns (c.6.5 and 1.5 per cent respectively). The village grounds could be divided into those utilized by the peasants (67–75 per cent), the manorial grounds of the estate owners (c.0.5–1.5 per cent), their meadows (0.5 per cent), forests (11–15 per cent) and waste land (c.1.5–2 per cent). The small percentage of the manorial grounds is striking. It reflects the above mentioned tendencies resulting from the regional conditions prevailing in Eastern White Russia.

As everywhere in White Russia, the predominant agricultural system was that of a fallow-grain three-field arrangement with the corrolary set of implements (primitive plough, sickle, scythe). Cultivation structure was not different in any essentials. In the fields winter and spring rye, oats, barley, wheat, German wheat, buckwheat and corn mixtures were grown. In gardens hemp, flax, broad bean, hop, peas and vegetables like: cabbage, cucumbers, onions, beats, carrots, parsley, turnip, parsnip were cultivated. Orchards were pretty well developed ¹⁰. Winter rye occupied the biggest cultivation area (40–50 per cent). In the spring lands a lot of oats was sown (33–50 per cent), less barley (4–10 per cent). The above specified cultivation structure was, however, not concomittant with the similar structure in the marketable production of the particular cultivations.

Yields did not differ from the average ones. Barley yields were the highest (5–7 grains) and the oats yields were the lowest (1–2 grains). The average yields of the four basic grains was in the period under investigation that of c. 2.5–3 grains. Hemp yielded 5 grains. The general yields of the peasant farms were higher than in the manorial grounds. The level of stock breeding was not much different from that known to be characteristic of other country-sides. We can establish that one cow gave c.13–18 litres of butter, i.e. 400–500 litres of milk.

III

The low percentage of manorial grounds as compared to the grounds utilized by the peasants is an index to the small share of the land-owners' own farm both in his income pattern and in the all-in-all production of the region. This results from the above discussed local conditions of Eastern White Russia, viz. its unfavourable corn export situation. For the 145–160 villages of the region there were in the period under investigation in the middle of the seven-

¹⁰ The fruits of Szklów were sold at the regional market. З. Даугяля, *Магилеуский купецкий дом в 1681 - 1685 гг.*, Працы клясы гистории, Т. II, Менск 1929, стр. 358.

teenth century only 7 manors, 5 at the end of the century and 3 in the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1762 even those few manors were liquidated as a result of Augustus Czartoryski's rent reform. Agricultural and live-stock production played a very unimportant role in the all-in-all latifundial economy. This was enhanced by the fact that there existed a special form of contribution made by the peasants for the estate administration purposes (*stacyjne*) which was also partly marketable. The total manorial production profits were as low as 0.1–7 per cent of the all-in-all estate profits in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Cattle breeding was more important and also the breeding of pigs, sheep and poultry. From the middle of the seventeenth till the middle of the eighteenth centuries there were c. 20–40 cows per 100 hectares of manorial lands and that was the average figure for the manors of the Commonwealth in that period. Bee-hiving, as we are going to demonstrate later on, was the domain of the peasants. Pond fisheries, however, were within the economic interest of the land-owner. In the Szklów estates the 7–8 ponds brought considerable profits (e.g. in 1693 c. 5 per cent of the sum total of profits).

Industry was also the domain of the land-owner. These were above all mills and 11–16 such mills were in operation (in peace time). Those water mills were used not only for grinding corn and producing flour but for grinding malt (for the breweries and distilleries) and for fully and ore smelting. Distilling industry was rather well developed. Grain vodka was produced and the yields were 9.5 to 12.5 litres of vodka from 50 litres of barley and oats. The number of inns kept by publicans-lease-holders increased from 13 in the seventeenth century to 22 in the latter half of the eighteenth century. To these figures must be added another 25 separate places where vodka was sold. From the beginning of the eighteenth century there were tanneries in operation and as a result of the construction of the new brick town in the years 1769–1788 there was a considerable development of building industry.

It should be noted that the feudal land-owner's own production activities did not constitute the main source of his income. Actually the main source of his income was the exploitation of the peasant farms connected with commercial activities. That was the form in which the magnates developed their activeness in their latifundial estates, who by the utilization of the local conditions (a strong peasant farm, the difficulties in transporting corn to Riga and demand for other agricultural products). That was the way in which the magnates wanted to ensure the increase or at least the stability of their income.

The weak development of the manorial economy was not so pronounced in the territories in which the middle gentry prevailed. In 1645 in the 45 Szklów villages leased by the middle gentry manorial lands constituted c. 19 per cent and those manors produced above all consumer goods needed by their owners.

IV

The peasant farms of Eastern White Russia developed under a strong influence of market conditions. This may be an explanation of the tendency to increase the area of the farms. From this point of view particularly interesting is the structure of the peasant grounds which were divided into 'settled' ones, i.e. basic apportionments (from which the feudal rent was paid), additional grounds (the *przyjemne*), from which only monetary rent and village fees were paid (money paid by the village as a whole).

In the middle of the seventeenth century peasant farms comprised on the average about 11 hectares of 'settled' grounds and c. 15 hectares additional grounds. Grounds devastated during the Polish-Russian hostilities of the middle of the seventeenth century (comprising in 1668 about 72 per cent of all the village lands) were divided among the remaining peasants for a low rent (about 15 per cent of the main apportionment rate). This changed the structure of the peasant grounds. The average area of a farm increased by c. 42.5 - 54 hectares, of which only 11 hectares (and later 7.7 hectares) comprised the basic apportionment. Following the increase of population in the middle of the eighteenth century the peasant apportionment diminished to 28.7 hectares and the additional grounds comprised only 9 per cent of the village grounds. It must be pointed out that after the rent reform the whole above mentioned apportionment (c. 28.7 hectares) became the basic, 'settled' apportionment.

Till the end of the seventeenth century the serfs of the Szklów estates comprised more than 90 per cent of all the village population. Then the number of rent-paying peasants increased and after the 1762 reform it comprised all the peasant farms. Boyars were also a part of rural population (c. 1.5 - 12 per cent). The other groups were other privileged peasants (2 - 7.5 per cent) such as the village foremen, haiduks, cossacks, shepherds, riflemen, publicans, millers, manorial craftsmen. The various categories of poorer strata of rural population possessing a house or a house and less than 1 hectare of ground (*komornicy*, *zagrodnicy*), were not too numerous. They were represented in greater numbers only in regions of more intensive settlement or after periods of war destruction in the latter half of the seventeenth and in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The peasant farms bred horses and oxen — draft animals, in bigger quantities than the manors. There were 3 such animals in the latter half of the seventeenth century in each peasant farm and in the latter half of the eighteenth century there were 6. Because we know that one pair of draft animals could serve for the cultivation of 11 hectares of land¹¹ and there were 6 draft animals for one farm after the rent reform, i.e. 3 pairs, and on the other hand there

¹¹ H. Łowmiański, *Rys historyczny województwa nowogródzkiego w jego dzisiejszych granicach (do 1795 r.)* (A Historical Outline of the Nowogródek Voivodeship in its Present-Day Boundaries, till 1795), Wilno 1935, p. 69.

was a 27.7 hectares apportionment, we may regard this as a favourable situation of the peasant farm¹², possessing the capacity of contributing to the land-owner's income.

Because of the absorbing town market and because of the peasants' own needs, the peasants bred a lot of animals for slaughter. The development of sheep-breeding is confirmed by the number of fulling-mills, producing woollen cloth. The extent of poultry breeding is demonstrated by the fact that above 8,000 geese and hens were given in the form of tributary rent in 1650. The same may be said about bee-hiving, which was the occupation of 12 to 20 per cent of the peasant population in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their honey tribute in 1650 was as large as 2,400 kilogram¹³. In the latter half of the seventeenth century there were one or two bee-hives for one homestead. The peasants were also engaged in fishery and they had at their disposal, apart from the Dnieper, one bigger river, 43 smaller rivers and two lakes.

What was the peasant farm burden system on the part of the land-owner? In the Szklów estates the development of the feudal rent underwent three stages, thus reflecting processes of a wider significance and characteristic of Eastern White Russia. Until the seventies of the seventeenth century the rent was collected from the peasants and tributes were exacted. Serf labour for each *włóka* was 10 days per annum. In the second period rent and weekly serf labour dominated (2 days for each homestead) and after 1762 rent became the only form of obligation.

In the first of the discussed periods the obligations of the peasants from one *włóka* (i.e. a unit of 22 hectares) of the basic apportionment (as converted into money) amounted to 35 zł and 4 groszes which equalled the value of 284 grams of silver or c. 640 litres of rye. In the second period (when instead of annual there was the obligation of the 2 days a week serf labour) their value amounted to 30 - 40 tynfs (i.e. c. 100 - 134 grams of silver or c. 300 - 400 litres of rye). When serf labour was abolished the obligations, according to the quality of the soil, amounted to 18 - 50 tynfs (i.e. c. 34 - 99 grams of silver or c. 400 - 500 litres of rye)¹⁴.

¹² This is also said about the territories of Eastern White Russia by П. Г. Козловский, *Земельные наделы и повинности крестьян в магнатских владениях Белоруссии во второй пол. XVIII в.*, Ежегодник по аграрной истории восточной Европы, 1961 (1963), стр. 221.

¹³ CL rkp. gosp. 648 III, k. 226 - 9, 1650.

¹⁴ The conversion into values in silver is based upon M. Gumowski's book, *Podręcznik numizmatyki polskiej* (A Handbook of Polish Numismatics), Cracow 1914, p. 290. One złoty in the middle of the seventeenth century was equal to 8.10 gram of silver, one tynf at the turn of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries was equal to 3.36 gram of silver and in the second half of the eighteenth century to 1.97 gram silver. The conversion of obligations into the values of rye was based upon the Szklów prices in the period under investigation.

As a result of the fact that peasants cultivated a lot of land apart from the basis apportionment and payable in rent, the structure and the rates of peasant obligations were somewhat differentiated. Therefore I have divided the sum total of the peasant obligations in a given year by the number of the *włóka* units (each c. 22 hectares) utilized by the peasants, thus arriving at the average value of obligations payable for one *włóka* (22 hectares). In 1650 it amounted together with 10 days' serf labour and tributes to c. 24.5 zł. (c. 198 grams of silver or c. 610 litres of rye), in 1715 together with two days weekly serf labour (but without tributes) 40 tynfs (c. 144 grams of silver or c. 650 litres of rye) and in 1770 the rent itself was 42 tynfs (c. 83 grams of silver or c. 650 litres of rye). The above presented data prove that the peasant population of the Szklów estates was in the worst situation in the first half of the eighteenth century, because for the other two periods I presented all the obligations and for 1715 only rent and serf labour. Such burdens as the *stacyjne* tribute (for the maintenance of the administration), extraordinary taxes during the Northern War and additional obligations exacted by tenants and by the administration of estates.

The sum total value of the obligations of peasant farms (apart from serf labour) as compared to the sum total of their incomes of the close of the seventeenth century approximated 20 per cent (from a worse *włóka*) and c. 22 per cent (from a better *włóka*). This is an index to conditions of husbandry of the peasant farms discussed and it shows that those conditions were better than in many other territories.

V

Market conditions were, as I have pointed out, an indispensable element of the functioning of the economic model organization of big land-ownership in Eastern White Russia. In the territory under discussion the town of Szklów was the centre of trade. This was a populous town (since the middle of the sixteenth century based on Magdeburg law). There were 1,100 - 1,200 houses in it in 1650 (i.e. 8 — 9 thousand inhabitants). This placed Szklów on the seventh position in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in this respect¹⁵. An index to its important commercial role at that time is the number of 470 trade units owned by 200 merchants and craftsmen selling their products. After the disastrous war destruction resulting from the wars of the second half of the seventeenth century the number of houses in Szklów was reduced to 40 - 48 per cent of the pre-war figure and the number of trade units to 40 per cent¹⁶.

¹⁵ After Wilno, Mohylew, Brześć, Słuck, Mińsk and Połock. J. Morzy, *Kryzys demograficzny...* tables 41 - 46.

¹⁶ Those data would be higher if we knew the number of artisans using standing allocations in the market place. They paid their dues collectively as a guild. For instance in 1668 shoemakers paid 60 ells. CL rkp. 4473 IV, k. 71.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century trade recaptured its importance. In the new Szklów built 2.5 kilometres to the North from the Old Town there was in the market place a quadrangle built of brick in which were 120 shops¹⁷. Apart from that, there were 12 butchers' stalls, 41 breweries and distilleries and 4 taverns in Szklów.

Trade in Szklów centred in weekly fairs and yearly fairs, the latter lasting 2 weeks and attracting Russian, Silesian and German traders¹⁸. An index to the high level of craftsmanship in Szklów (there were more than 70 specializations and 9 - 15 guilds) is the fact that Szklów experts worked in Moscow in such branches of trade and industry as arms production, goldsmithery and textile production¹⁹. Also in Moscow sculptor Mikhailov and painter Osipov ornamented the Kremlin²⁰ at the behest of czar Aleksi Mikhalovitch. Another index to the role of handicraftsmanship in Szklów is the above mentioned construction of the town with 13 streets, a palace and a commercial complex in the years 1769 - 1788.

At the local market the peasants sold grain (on the other hand according to my estimate the town produced, after deducting the grain needed for sowing, c. 580 tons, whereas the consumption on the part of the burghers, without fodder for cattle comprised c. 2,560 tons²¹). The peasants also delivered hemp, hop, slaughter-animals, hides, honey, wax, oil, birch tar, ash, wood and wooden products. They bought at the local market such things as: agricultural implements (mainly scythes and sickles and iron parts for their ploughs) and clothes. The registers of market taxes and fees include products of the burghers sold at the market and the products of the local craftsmen, the products of the surrounding farms and goods imported from Russia, Königsberg, Gdańsk, Frankfort, Wrocław, Leipzig, Hamburg and Riga. Those registers include mainly such goods as: furs, hides, handicraft goods, salt, wines, metals and chemical products. Szklów functioned as a local market centre in strict co-operation with the neighbouring towns, like Mohylew, Hołowczyn, Tołoczyn, Łukomla, Smolany, Orsza, Dąbrowna, Wodwa, Kopyś and Witebsk and the Dnieper Ukraine trade centres.

¹⁷ В. А. Чантурия, *Архитектура Белоруссии конца XVIII — начала XIX в.*, Минск 1962, стр. 153.

¹⁸ *Белоруссия в эпоху феодализма*, Т. II, Меньск 1959, стр. 352, нр. 239, 1765 р.,

¹⁹ Русско-белорусские связи, Сборник Документов (1570 - 1667), Минск, 1967, стр. 371, нр. 347, 20 II 1667 р.

²⁰ См. Л. С. Абецедарский, *Белорусы в Москве XVII в.*, Минск 1957, стр. 14, 31 - 33 и след.

²¹ H. Łowmiański, *Podstawy gospodarcze formowania się państw słowiańskich* (The Economic Basis of the Formation of Slav States), Warsaw 1953 p. 76. The author estimates that there was in the case of yield of 3 grains c. 3,740 kilograms of grain from one włóka. Ibid. (p. 157) the annual consumption for one person c. 300 kilograms of grain.

In the period under discussion Szklów like the neighbouring Mohylew traded extensively with the Russian merchants. They opened their shops in Szklów. In 1739 as much as c. 1,000 square metres of the market grounds of the town belonged to them²². The merchants of Szklów bought from them large quantities of hides, furs and fur products which they in turn transported to Gniezno, Toruń and Lublin. For instance in 1600 fur raw materials from Szklów comprised c. 18 per cent, fur products c. 44 per cent and dressed hides c. 8 per cent of the whole White Russian imports of the August yearly fair in Gniezno²³. Those goods were transported to Gniezno by 4 Szklów men, representatives of the merchant companies of that town.

The merchants of Szklów also delivered Russian furs and hemp to Königsberg. The extent of that trade is best witnessed by the return register of the customs office in Wierzbolowo of 1709²⁴. The Szklów merchants also participated in the Riga trade. The 1616 customs office register of Polotsk²⁵ alone lists 85 *strugi* (broad flat bottomed boats) and 11 smaller boats belonging to 7 merchants of Szklów (c. 15 per cent of the total number of White Russian *strugi* of that year), which carried c. 72.6 tons of hemp thread, c. 192 hectolitres of flax-seed, 18,684 hectolitres of ash. Those merchants bought in Riga such articles as: salt, herrings, vinegar, wines, olive oil, condiments, southern fruits and clothes. From other fragmentary data of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries one can surmise that the trade of the Szklów men with Riga was a stable one, particularly because the owner of the Szklów estates had such stable ties with Riga. The considerable extent of that Riga trade is witnessed by accounts of the successive years 1693 - 1704 and 1715 - 1717²⁶. Those commercial transactions consisted in buying up from the peasants for money, for salt or for rent, for prices much lower than those of the market, such products as flax-seed and hemp thread and in transporting those goods free of charge, at the expense of the peasants to the Bieszenkowice landing-place and from there to Riga on the Dvina river. The accounts of the Szklów trade made it possible for me to estimate what were the expenses of a commercial expedition (the cost of the goods bought up, the hire of the boat, the loading

²² CL rkp. 1582 IV, 1739, k. 4 v.

²³ A microfilm from the University Main Library, Vilnius, AT 87, No. 13, 159. Cf. also J. Topolski, *Rola Gniezna w handlu europejskim od XV do XVII w.* (The Role of Gniezno in European Trade from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries), *Studia i Materiały do Dziejów Wielkopolski i Pomorza* 1962 z. 2, pp. 52 - 3.

²⁴ CL rkp. 2585 IV, k. 368 v-428.

²⁵ AT 87, No. 13, 162.

²⁶ This problem was discussed in an article by the author of the present work entitled *Związki handlowe Białorusi wschodniej z Rygą w końcu XVII i na początku XVIII w.* (The Trade Ties of Eastern White Russia with Riga at the Close of the Seventeenth and the Beginning of the Eighteenth Centuries), *RDSG*, Vol. XXIX, Poznań 1967, pp. 9 - 31.

of the hemp, the wages of the boat crew, customs and unloading of the hemp in Riga) and profits (the sale of the hemp, the profits of the salt trade, payments for the transportation of the Szklów merchants, the so called *frokt*). In the years 1694 - 1704 the profit of that trade amounted to c. 19 - 43.5 per cent of the invested capital and its high rate was achieved by the exploitation of the unpaid labour of the peasants (transport by their carts) and by the possibility of dictating the price on the part of the owner of the estates of Szklów. In the years 1694 - 1704 c. 918 tons of hemp thread and 8,364 hectolitres of hemp-seed (including 93 per cent hemp thread and 92 per cent hemp-seed produced by the Szklów estates peasants). In the years 1715 - 1717 the quantity was c. 183 tons and 1,450 hectolitres respectively.

The Szklów estates also traded with Wilno and in that case hemp was transported by means of peasant carts. Although that was a very profitable business, the owner of the Szklów estates, tied by a credit system with the merchants of Riga, was obliged to supply those goods by Dvina transport to Riga. The merchants of Riga applied a kind of commercial pressure. By granting monetary credit to the owner of the estates they guaranteed for themselves a continuous supply of agricultural products²⁷.

That system activated the economic approach of the owner of the estates and the merchants of Riga who knew the specific features of Eastern White Russia which was abundant in hemp, secured the product they needed. The method of financial clearing in Riga consisted either in payment of debt to the Riga traders and in contracting new credit for the purchase of salt and other articles or in sending the money paid directly to the owner of the estates.

VI

An index to the economic structure of the Szklów estates is provided by the comparison of incomes and expenditure in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The structure of incomes in percentage:

	1644 - 1650	1693 - 1739	1770 - 1778
town rents	5 - 10 per cent	6 - 9 per cent	3 - 6 per cent
village rents and tributes	43 - 71 „ „	37 - 57 „ „	43 - 54 „ „
industrial and com- mercial leases	9 - 38 „ „	30 - 47 „ „	42 - 53 „ „
other industrial and com- mercial incomes	0.4 - 8 „ „	0.2 - 23 „ „	—
manors	0.1 - 2 „ „	0.6 - 6 „ „	—
forestry and fisheries	0.8 - „ „	1 - 3 „ „	0.2 - 1.5 „ „
land leases	7 - 13 „ „	—	—

²⁷ G. Jensch (*Der Handel Rigas im XVI. Jh. Mitteilungen aus der livländischen Geschichte*, Vol. XXIV, Riga 1930, No. 2, p. 134) points out that in 1702 the owner

Pecuniary expenditure could be classified as legal and organizational (that expenditure item comprised in the above mentioned periods of time from 5 to 85 per cent of the sum total of expenditure), payment of debts and credit servicing (0.6 - 76 per cent), the salaries of the administration, the wages of servants, garrison expenses (0.1 - 58 per cent), the purchase of provisions for the castle (0.1 - 7.8 per cent), sums used for increasing grain and live-stock production (0.1 - 3 per cent), building investment, including accounts of the craftsmen's wages (0.1 - 46.7 per cent), expenditure connected with improvement of peasant farms (0.2 - 3 per cent) and all the remaining expenditure of the Szklów court (0.1 - 3.5 per cent).

The typical for those times accountancy of the Szklów estates does not provide us with any basis for a complete presentation of the finance arrangements of the owner of those estates. The real income estimated on the basis of accounts comprised c. 54 - 93 per cent of gross receipts and, on the other hand, the sums that were sent to the owner of the estates sometimes were bigger than the sums of receipts estimated on the basis of accounts. Thus it may be said that the accounts do not represent all the pecuniary receipts of the owner, mainly because there were apart from the incomes of the latifundial economy such things as a variety of credits obtained either in Riga or from the rich Szklów merchants and tenants.

From the analysis which I have carried out one may arrive at a conclusion that Eastern White Russia, at least in its economically more advanced regions, was a territory characterized by a specific economic organization. Unlike many other territories, it lacked a developed manorial economy, producing grain for foreign markets. The feudal land-owners developed here a somewhat different variety of methods ensuring them increasing incomes or at least maintaining those incomes on a set level. This was more profitable for the peasant farms and for the market conditions of the region, because of the absence of a developed serf labour system. It must be emphasized that the general level of the economy of the region was higher than it was generally thought about Eastern White Russia, although the region consisted of parts highly differentiated in their economic development and level. In order to arrive at a more comprehensive image of that differentiation it is necessary to continue research.

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of the Szklów estates, A. M. Sieniawski borrowed together with two Szklów burghers 7,300 thalers from the Riga merchant Berens. Cf. also U. Handrack, *Der Handel der Stadt Riga im 18 Jh.*, Jena 1932, p. 81.

