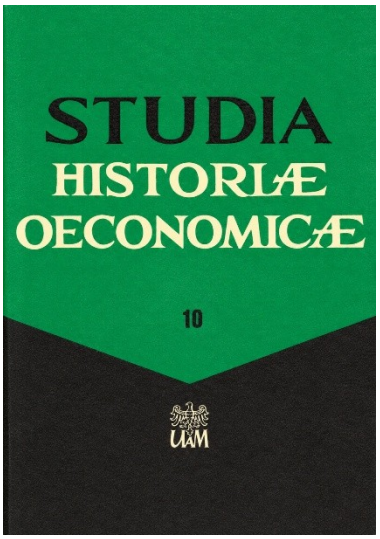


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PEASANT ECONOMY IN THE COAL AND SMELTING REGIONS OF MIDDLE-EAST EUROPE BEFORE AND DURING THE EARLY PERIOD OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

I take into consideration those territories where coal and smelting production has already been undertaken before capitalistic industrialization and which then developed into industrial regions[1]. Namely I am trying to show the influence of some technological-economic types of the coal and smelting industry on peasant economy.

In this influence the following phases can be distinguished:

a) the phase of so-called traditional, preindustrial mining-smelting industry correlated with typical of this branch of industry — feudal economy. This economy dominated in agriculture as well. At the same time it became the phase of territorial distraction in mining-smelting industry;

b) the phase of gradual passing from traditional to modern economy (i.e. capitalistic economy) and technology (the change of power-fuel base) while preserving pre-industrial type of infrastructure especially in connection with means of communication; simultaneously territorial concentration of mining-smelting industry starts around coal ledges, in agriculture — passing from feudal to capitalistic economy;

c) the phase of introducing in mining and smelting modern technology and economy on the basis of already established industrial regions and development of modern forms of infrastructure, especially of railway system with simultaneous modernization of peasants' farming and disappearance of feudal relations in the village;

The following phases can be treated as a model. In the development of particular regions some elements of those phases could be interrelated or parallel, some might not have appeared at all. Further phases of the investigated processes are extended beyond the initial stages of industrialization.

[1] By a geographical-economic region we understand a territorial complex of a production-service type which differs from neighbouring areas in terms of characteristic economic forms and in terms of the social and professional framework of the population. A region is a historically shaped category at a given stage of economic development which is liable to constant changes. Compare A. Fajferek: *Region ekonomiczny i metody analizy regionalnej* [Economic Region and the Methods of Regional Analysis], Warszawa 1966, p. 11.

2.

Economic-social differences between the territorial "eastward and westward from the Elbe river" also influenced the characteristics of relations of peasant economy and mining-smelting industry. In most of the countries spreading eastward from the Elbe river such industry was developing within the form of great latifundia. The results of development in mining and smelting have been recognized in peasants' farms subordinated to these latifundia:

a) growing needs of transport have been fulfilled by villain draught-horse service; tenants of small farms without own draught-horses had to do their villain service "on foot", usually by wood cutting;

b) a reasonably great part of peasant families has constantly been connected with industry according to their feudals lords' will as if they inherited this forced work in mining and smelting;

c) development of smelting lead to devastation of the forests and progress in building irrigation systems which eventually reduced possibilities of suing landowner's woods and water;

d) skilled miners and iron masters brought by feudal lords from the outside of the territories of their latifundia were given farms as a part of their wages and a link with the place of work; such apportionments diminished the area of the land left at local peasants' disposal[2].

The situation of peasants in those latifundia in which both industry and farming were developing simultaneously was extremely unpleasant:

a) the majority of peasants did their villain service for both sections of landlord's estate;

b) an average amount of villain service for a given peasant land unit increased and in the case of the demographic stagnancy also the amount of villain service per serf;

c) the total area of land used by peasants was reduced;

d) where the population increased there the feudal lord wanted also more accumulated man power; he then limited a chance of leaving the village by peasants not working on latifundium; the burden to provide means for living for these people also rested upon the remaining serfs.

[2] With time passing both social and legal differerences between two categories of employed workers i.e. between miners or iron workers with appointed land and peasants well established in industry — became vague; many intermediate forms also existed. P. Hapák: *Dejiny Železiarskeho Priemyslu na Slovensku od konca 18. storočia do roku 1867*, Bratislava 1962, pp. 230, 231; *Historia Śląska. T. 2: 1763 - 1850.* Pod red. Wacława Długoborskiego. *Cz. 1: 1763 - 1806* [The History of Silesia.Vol. 2: 1763 - 1850. Ed. by W. Długoborski. Part 1:1763 - 1806]. Wrocław 1966 p. 199; E. Pietraszek: *Wiejscy robotnicy kopalń i hut. Dynamika przemian społeczno-kulturowych w sierszańskim ośrodku górniczym w XIX i XX wieku* [Rural Workers in the Mines and Foundries. The Dynamics of the Social and Cultural Changes in the Mining Centre of Siersza in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries]. Wrocław 1966 p. 56 - 57.

Possibilities of either increase or change of the kind of villain service were based upon personal peasant's dependence and superior laws of the landlord in connection with his farm. Thus the owners of industrialized estates were interested in preserving these elements of the feudal system, the more so if lack of coal ledges made introduction of new smelting technology impossible.

Peasants, on the other hand, strongly protested against the increase of servile labour in industry, especially against draught-horse service and with the abolition of vassal relations the majority of peasants "drafted" into industry preferred to stick to cultivation of their own small holdings. Hence, in the largest feudal mining and smelting centres after peasant reforms the number of the employed workers fell. New workers were already enrolled from the population having no connections with industry whatsoever[3].

Peasants tried to exploit mineral resources of their own land like iron ore or coal and then to smelt ore individually, usually together with craftsmen or iron traders from the towns. In the 16th century out of these circles of people small capital smelting traders recruited called "free forgers". In the 17th century great landowners took into possession "free" ironworks prosecuting, on the basis of feudal laws for the inside part of the land soil, new efforts to establish independent peasant's production.

They have not managed to stop it altogether yet. In some regions small trade coal and smelting production was the only chance for the peasants to be in touch with the market and to earn some money. Therefore such production was growing all the time, yet it was only of ephemeral character because of strong feudal opposition. Contrary to Western Europe "eastward from the Elbe river" small individual coal-smelting business or peasant-townsman[4] cooperatives did not develop.

3.

Introduction of new technology made the owners of mines and iron works, including feudal lords, substitute compulsory servile labour (villain service) by hired labour. Abolition of feudal burdens deprived lords of the possibility of using in transport draught-horse service of peasants. Works till now carried on under pressure peasants began to do as volunteers on condition of full payment. Feudal mining and smelting existed on the basis of peasant eco-

[3] Best of all relations of the kind have been examined those in Ural Mountains; compare B. B. Адамов: *Особенности формирования горнозаводского пролетариата Урала.* In „Рабочий класс и рабочее движение в России". Москва 1966.

[4] Specially great role was played by peasant's mining-smelting business in the regions of later Rheinland and Westfalen Basin. Compare F. Schulte: *Die Entwicklung der gewerblichen Wirtschaft in Rheinland-Westfalen im 18. Jahrhundert.* Köln 1959, pp. 21, 22 and 95 to 97.

nomy; its early capitalistic form created new urges for development of this economy.

These urges were based on:

a) establishing of the local man power markets absorbing the excess of the population, making life on the farm without keeping "extra" people easier;

b) making possible for the farmers to have some extra earnings outside agricultural sphere;

c) developing local markets for farming and cultivation products as a result of agglomeration of non-farming population.

In the first phase of industrialization unskilled miners and iron workers enrolled mainly from the local population[5]. Data taken from several coal basins are surprisingly convergent (table 1). Because these regions were hardly urbanized it can be assumed that in industry worked, most of all, peasants without land or small-holders as well as sons and daughters from numerous

Table 1

Territorial origin of workers in the Ruhr, Ostrava-Karwina and Doniec Basin in the latter half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century

Region	Year	Proportion of total employed coming from zone:			
		A	B	C	D
Ruhr	1875	53.5%	28.0%	18.5%	—
	1893	72%		24.5%	3.5%
	1908	53%		38%	9%
Ostrava					
Karwina	1848	76.5%	17%	6.5%	—
	1879	38%	28.5%	33.5%	—
Doniec	1871	82.5%	15.5%	2%	—
	1884	51%	47%	2%	—
	1900	55.5%	31.5%	13%	—

Key: Zone A — the territory of the given region with its environs (up to 50 km from the individual plants)
Zone B — remaining areas of the given region (i. e. more than 50 km away)+adjacent territories
Zone C — remaining provinces of the same country or state not directly adjacent to the given industrial region
Zone D — territories of another state not immediately adjacent to the region and its environs.

Sources: W. Brepohl: *Der Aufbau des Ruhrvolkes im Zuge der Ost-West Wanderung*. Recklinghausen 1948, p. 250; K. Murzynowska: *Polskie wychodźstwo zarobkowe w Zagłębiu Ruhry w latach 1880 - 1914* [Polish Economic Emigration in the Ruhr Basin in the Years 1880 - 1914]. Wrocław 1972, tabl. 1 and 2; С. И. Томасов: *Рабочие Донбасса в XIX веке*. Москва, Ленинград 1963.

M. Myška: *Genese a vnitřní struktura dělnické třídy v uhelném Moravské Ostravy (1828 - 1879)*. "Studie k vývoji ostravské prumyslové oblasti" 1/1966, p. 74.

[5] In the report delivered at Symposium ICOHTEC at Jabłonna near Warsaw I tried to determine phases of industrialization from the point of view of changes in sources and forms of influx of man-power; W. Długoborski: *Napływ siły roboczej do przemysłu w krajach Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej (1850 - 1918)* [The Influx of Labour to Industry in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (1850 - 1918)]. Katowice 1973.

family units of even well-to-do farmers. In those months when there was no field work mainly smallholders not having their own draught-horses but also farm owners used to take up their seasonal work in mining and smelting industry.

In mines and iron works payment was higher and conditions of employment more convenient than in estate agriculture. In the regions of industrialization great landlords were forced to better these conditions. Both local people and outsiders could make profit and take advantage of this approximately favourable situation on man power market. Yet in a large scale this influx developed later on in further phases of industrialization (compare table 1).

The most convenient way of earning money outside agriculture was waggon driving for those farmers who owned draught-horses. In transport of mining-smelting products the owners of mines and iron works used almost exclusively hired peasant draught-horse service. For some peasants such draught-horse work became the main source of earning their living while land cultivation — a secondary one. The prospects of earnings by waggon driving caused that also smallholders wanted to buy draught-horses and often took loans for this expense but at the same time farms were being neglected. Further possibilities of earning by draught-horse service were in transport of foodstuffs and in road building.

Increase in number of non-agricultural population caused greater needs not only for food but also for housing and other services. Together with development of the centre of the region with its industrial-urban settlements the main role in approvisation was played by agricultural-peasant peripheries. Here peasant economy was in rivalry with landowner's as well as with trader's who used to bring rural products even from a great distance. In the centre of the region so-called patronal buildings situated next to the works did not keep in pace with the increase of the number of workers. They had to rent rooms, sometimes only beds in the houses of the local peasants who having extra earnings often tried to enlarge their houses beyond needs of their own families. Of similar significance was the increase of needs for all sorts of services which caused that peasant craftsmen devoted themselves totally to non-agricultural work and gave up farming altogether.

Improvement of the land laws accompanying abolition of feudal relations, getting full ownership of the apportionment through affranchisement enabled peasants to "scratch" freely looking for coal or iron ore, zink ore and also to enter legally into companies with townsmen or mining clerks. They were still unable, though, for the successful rivalry with business firms based upon landowner's or bank funds. Limited financial means did not allow to exploit deeper ledges and to introduce new mining technique. Only those peasants managed to establish themselves as mining-smelting businessmen who had been administrators or tenants in lord's mines and iron works before and

therefore possessed certain amount of technical knowledge and money. The rest of them tried to sell land rich with minerals in most convenient terms.

Accumulation was possible by enlivening architecture especially industrial. In their own land peasants excavated limestone, fireproof clay, gravel and the like. Some burned bricks or made limestone quarries or did sporadically building works. With these peasant businessmen of building craftsmen and "enterprisers" were in rivalry (enterprisers of merchant ancestry). In towns and in urbanized village settlements participation of rich peasants in architectural movement was limited, in general, to waggon driving in the case of poorer — to seasonal hired service.

Combination of all kinds of forms of outside agriculture earnings influenced and formed specific type of peasant economy for mining-smelting basin regions which consisted of waggon driving as the main financial source or of opencast exploitation of the natural mineral resources. The secondary part was played by seasonal employment of few members of peasant family in industry, renting of the rooms and the like. Land farming and cultivation played only food function. Meanwhile, in peripheries of coal basin favourable conditions were formed to help to develop the production of small agricultural producers.

The range of peasant earnings in industry depended on number and size of the works and on economic-social relations of a given region. In one of Polish basins in its initial phase of applying new capitalistic economy and technology in mining and smelting industry nearly about 50% of the whole number of peasant families were employed in industry and in more industrial regions — at least 75% of them[6]. Unfortunately we are not in a position to calculate what part has been played by outside agriculture earnings in comparison with the total wages in those families.

4.

Together with establishing of the new technique of iron production there came popularization of coal as useful fuel and the source of power and heating. Progress of industrialization favoured urban processes. As the result of territorial spreading of mines and iron works house building and commercial service buildings took place causing development of infrastructure. Thus not much place was left for farming. Rising of prices for the land as a result of industrialization and urbanization made farmers get rid of their farms.

[6] Data given for Dąbrowa Basin (Kingdom of Poland) for the year 1846 and a little later, for Upper-Silesia Basin; compare J. Śmiałowski: *Zarobkowanie pozarolnicze ludności rolniczej w Królestwie Polskim w latach przeduwłaszczeniowych (1815 - 1864)* [The Non-Agricultural Earnings of Agricultural Population in the Kingdom of Poland in the Years before the Abolition of Serfdom (1815 - 1864)]. Łódź 1973, p. 23 together with personal evaluation of the author of the report.

Because of the development of railway system of the local lines joining the nearest places and works of the region there was no longer need for peasant waggon driving and for keeping farms orientated to draught-horsebreeding.

On territories of mining-smelting basins transformed into real industrial regions — compare note. 1 — rural production destined for the market — ceased, smallholdings disappeared. Only plots of ground crop of which was treated as a supplementary sum being added to non-agricultural earnings – remained.

These processes were accompanied by disappearance of peasantry as the separate social class. Absorption of peasantry in the process of forming industrial society should not be identified with the group so-called "proletariat" (working class) in mining-smelting regions. Only in the second phase industrial workers recruited mainly from the local farmers deprived of land or smallholders; in the third phase — from the influx of population from outside the region (see table) and from sons and daughters of the local miners and iron workers.

Rich peasants found their place in new society as independent craftsmen, lower middle class merchants, tenement-house and restaurant owners, some became even small capital businessmen. Entering into lower middle class of townsmen was possible through accumulation of finance in the proceeding phase either from farming products on the market or from outside agriculture earnings or by farm selling.

In the peripheries of mining-smelting regions farms, owned by small producers, survived. Its importance of food supply in the region — decreased. Due to railway progress new products were brought en masse from other regions of monocultural agriculture, sometimes even from far distant places.

5.

In the first phase based upon feudal privileges mining and smelting industry delayed the development of peasant farming similarly to the needs of other spheres of latifundia economy. In the second phase along with the change of economic-social relations including economy of industry development of industrialization favoured to establish peasant economy specially its outside agriculture sections; thus such progress was not always accompanied by modernization of agricultural production. In the third phase developing industry and newly formed housing settlements absorbed peasant farms; still it was possible for a part of peasantry to keep their position in the middle stages of social hierarchy.

Not all mining-smelting basins entered into the third phase. In some industrialization and urbanization process ceased already in the second phase. Such basins formed industrial-agricultural regions where farming could still profit on being very close to industrial works of small or medium size, which

would not become a threat to farm existence and where slow progress in railway system helped to establish the local products' market. In further perspective, however, stagnation in industry could lead to overpopulation of villages and cause a delay in development of peasant economy by the increased number of unecessary population[7].

[7] The example of this kind of alternative may be the development of so-called Old Polish Basin (Kingdom of Poland); compare J. Zieliński: *Staropolskie Zagłębie Przemysłowe* (Old Polish Industrial Basin). Wrocław—Warszawa 1965, pp. 83, 84 and 144, 145.