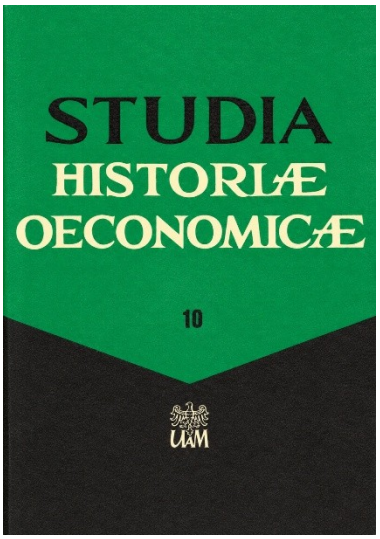


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PEASANT ECONOMY BEFORE AND DURING THE EARLY PERIOD OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Conclusions II

The reports presented during our colloquium along with the discussion give us the possibility to draw a general image of the peasant economy during the period of the industrialization processes. The most important problem for us was to determine the role of peasant economy in the global structure of economic life and the mutual relationship between peasant economy and the gradually industrialized "external" world. Our colloquium provides us not only with the material and ideas to build a general model of peasant economy during the processes of early industrialization but also allows — giving many detailed information — to subject this model to the concretization procedure.

Let us first draw your attention to the general model. Here we have to do with some basic problems (and relationships) such as:

(1) Peasant economy (peasant farm) as a subsistence unit and, to a lesser or greater extent, as a source of production surplus for the market at the same time as a source of manpower for industry;

(2) Peasant economy as a part of the larger structures (village commune, family commune, manorial system etc.);

(3) Peasant economy under the impact of the "external" world and the results of that influence (transition to money economy, intensification, modernization).

It is easy to see that in this model the dynamic force generating changes of peasant economy is the "external" world, i.e. first of all the primary accumulation and the industrialization processes both caused by many factors. But all this does not explain why and how did the peasant economy respond to the external stimuli which could be more or less compulsory or leaving more or less room for free peasant economic decision-making.

And here we are approaching the very heart of the model — its deeper layers: the peasant economic activity and its motivation because there were not unpersonal forces but peasants who responded to the "external" world stimuli. In reconstructing the peasant decision-making we have to analyse the general situation of peasant economy, peasant goals and peasant know-

ledge about the condition of their economic activity. And as I have already stressed in my introductory remarks any reconstruction of peasant motivation structure would be impossible without determination of the relationship between peasant income (peasant economic and social situation) and peasant aspirations (required level of life). Without peasant tendency to keep or to improve their standard of life (actual and required) no increase of economic activity could be expected.

Let me now pass to some concretization problems which emerge from the general model. These are:

(1) Peasant economies as a part of an economic and social (to some extent political) system;

(2) Peasant economy and the commodities and manpower market (i.e. peasant economy as a producer and a source of manpower);

(3) Changes of peasant economy under the impact of "external" world (first of all of industrialization);

(4) The dynamics of peasant income and consumption.

All these problems were analysed during the colloquium with regard to different geographical regions and to different types of peasant economies. Special stress has been put in our discussion on regional approach. We know now better that the regional concretization concerning the period of industrialization when the economic history was more and more a history of regional interdependence is for the explanation of human economic activities and historical processes extremely important. The methodological controversy on the importance of local and general approach can be very simply solved if we take into consideration that both approaches are necessary. The concretization of models (general hypotheses) seems to be the heart of our method. Professor Tveite has delivered a very good example of both approaches in his analysis of the Norvegian agriculture.

Ad (1). Let me pass briefly to the four above-mentioned problems which were in so interesting manner enriched during our discussion. First the problem of peasant economies as a part of a larger system. From this point of view we ought to distinguish first of all the countries with the manorial serf economy and other countries with different agrarian situation but in sum with more room for relatively free peasant decision-making. In the countries with the manorial serf economy peasant economies were only elements in a broader system directed by the lord in his manor. Here the main contacts with the market were concentrated in the hands of the lord (or determined by the lord) and also the social structure of peasantry reflected the lords' economic interests. The peasant economy was regarded by the lord as a means to keep developing the lord's production and peasant holding as a subsistence unit (what has been demonstrated in Professor Kula's book on the model of feudal economy). In this condition only the land reforms in the

nineteenth century could changes this situation thus opening the way for the modernization of peasant economy. This does not signify that the early industrialization (before the land reforms) did not influence the peasant economy in Eastern and Central Europe. We could observe this e.g. in Professor Madurowicz's paper showing the impact of mining and foundry industry in eighteenth-century Poland on the forms of peasant settlement and on the social structure of peasantry; but here the lords were interested in developing industry. After the land reform when the peasants got more freedom in their desicion-making the essor of the industrial development based on forced labour expired. Here we have to do with the second of the three types of post-reform development of such industrial regions. These three types of development were: 1. reagrarization of the region, 2. further industrialization, and 3. a mixed type. These types were distinguished during the discussion (Prof. Długoborski).

In Western Europe (e.g. in England as we have seen in the extremely important for our subject Professor Thirsk's paper) the lords' supervision was very differentiated, more or less close. The expanding of the share-cropping system (métayage) in many countries had included peasant economy in a system but as far as peasant activity is concerned it was much more loose than the rigid manorial-serf system.

Peasant economies regardless the economic system in which they worked belonged normally to another system, namely to the village commune (communauté, Gemeinde) analysed first of all by Professor Heitz and Professor Wellmann. Sometimes peasants lived in family communes (analysed by Professor Vučo). The point is how far in relation to agriculture technique and production and to other aspects of peasant life did the influence of the commune reach. This influence was very strictly connected with the traditional three-course rotation system but, as e.g. Professor Rusiński has stressed, we should not overestimate this influence. Along with the changes in global economy of the country, with industrialization processes the traditional commune changed too but only the land reforms (I think here of the manorial-serf economy countries) could give way to the individualization of peasant economy and to the communes of a new type (distinguished by Prof. Heitz). The role of communes during the early industrialization period was very differentiated — negative or not. Especially important they were for the village poor. In this context, as was mentioned by Prof. Długoborski, one has to take into consideration the common tights of use which peasant had to the forests, waters, pastures and which along with the decomposition of old communes had deprived many village inhabitants of necessary subsistence thus forcing them to seek for other occupations.

Ad (2). During the period of industrialization grew the role of peasant economy as a producer of agriculture products and as a source of manpower

for industry. During our discussion we have analysed this problem in two aspects: as a growing density of interregional and local interdependencies (which has been presented in reference to England in Prof. Thirsk's paper, in reference to Serbia in Prof. Vučo's analysis, to Hungary in Prof. Wellmann's paper) and as a development of international market. The structure of this international market reflected the differences in the process of industrialization in different countries. The influence of the international market in the second half of the nineteenth century has been shown in more detailed manner in the case of Ireland by Prof. Huttman, in the case of Denmark by Prof. Pedersen and in the case of Norway by Prof. Tveite. In Ireland it was the shift from tillage production to husbandry which became increasingly more profitable for the Irish farmers; in Denmark the pattern was similar: the gradual conversion from corn-growing and cattle-fattening to combined animal husbandry and dairying. Norway was a special case where the notion of farmer differed (because of combined occupations) from that of other countries.

As to the manpower for industry the participants of the colloquium stressed its complexity. There were two interconnected processes both connected with the primary accumulation (as Prof. Vučo had stressed): the expropriation of peasantry and the more "quiet" transition of peasants to industry. The case of Italy analysed by Professor Poni appeared extremely interesting from this point of view. The way from peasants to industry-workers was sometimes very long and complex. In this respect a new light has been thrown on overseas emigration (Prof. Tveite and others) and demographic problems (Prof. Borowski). We have to remember that peasants' participation in the industrialization process consisted not only in supplying manpower but sometimes also accumulated capital (especially in the early stages of industrialization).

Ad (3). One of the main tasks of our colloquium was to determine the changes of peasant economy under the impact of the 'external" world, first of all under the impact of industrialization. There were much more structures and factors to be changed in the countries with the manorial-serf economy (where the dependence of peasant economy on the lord was very strong) than in Western Europe. In both cases, however, three types of changes can be distinguished 1. a change from transaction in kind to transaction in money (the earliest change), 2. the intensification of peasant farming and 3. the modernization of peasant farming which consisted in widespread use of industrial and scientific inputs in agriculture. These problems were analysed in many papers (Thirsk, Vučo, Wellmann, Heitz, Pedersen, Huttman, Tveite, Kostrowicka) and many interesting questions have been formulated. The problem of the origins and diffusions of agricultural innovation has been regarded in two aspects: the geographical aspect (the role of such territories as Italy, the Netherlands) and the social aspect (which social group did the initiative to innovate come from ?). Also the problem of the forms of agri-

cultural innovation inspired to many interesting remarks. Such questions as the peasant tendency to increase their income, their growing knowledge about the condition of their activity, their fear of risk and the influence of the local and foreign market and so forth allows us to deepen the analysis. Very convincing was the observation that the early innovation process consisted in the more refined understanding of what different types of soil needed. Then came different improvements which finally led to the more pronounced modernization of agriculture. The innovation period corresponds roughly with the early industrialization process and the modernization with the more developed industrialization or with the deeper market influence. The early period of industrialization (in England the eighteenth century) was rather favourable for peasantry; the early industrialization processes did not affect so much the traditional socio-agrarian structure of the countryside (golden age of peasant economy) because they opened many new earning possibilities while during the modern industrialization the peasant economy and peasant class underwent many deep changes.

Ad (4). All these developments were the results of thousands and millions of individual and group decision-makings. For the analysis of the process of peasant decision-making, although that process is still to be studied, our colloquium has brought also many interesting materials and ideas. One can say that, generally stressing, peasants behaved themselves (in their economic activity) rationally. Very often their traditional approach to the external stimuli was, from their point of view, very well justified. It is necessary to keep in mind that the "external" world (market, examples etc.) did not influence the peasant economy directly in a determinative way but through peasants' consciousness, peasants' mentality, their knowledge and vision of the world. It is not easy to reconstruct this subjective factor but there are some objective phenomena which we can quantify and thus make more intelligible peasant activity. These phenomena are, first of all, peasant income and peasant consumption and peasant level of life (actual and required). In the papers of Prof. Achilles and Prof. Cauwenberghe we had to do with very interesting, and at the same time methodologically different approaches which lead us to the better knowledge of peasant income. Professor Leskiewiczowa's paper was a very important attempt to quantify the peasant consumption to which very interesting findings have been presented by Prof. Goy. The study of the consumption gives us not only one of the keys to the peasant economic decision-making but also allows us to see better the peasant differentiation and peasants' contacts with the market.

It is possible to show many questions which as far as our theme is concerned, wait to be researched and explained (the most important is reminding Prof. Wyczański in his final paper) but it is very well when after a discussion one has a desire to discuss anew.