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TRANSFORMATIONS IN PEASANT AGRICULTURE
IN YUGOSLAVIA AND POLAND

Taking into consideration multiple reservations concerning comparative analyses of different spheres of the socio-economic life, especially those connected with diverse determinants of the natural environment, varied historical experience as well as different determinants of the economic, social, and political nature in both countries, an attempt has been made to compare chosen characteristics of the socio-economic situation of the village and peasant agriculture in Yugoslavia and Poland.

The socio-political system in both analyzed countries is socialism (in Yugoslavia "self-management socialism") introduced after the Second World War.

The structure of agricultural system in both countries carries a very close resemblance (while simultaneously it differs from other European socialist countries). In Yugoslavia it is the individual peasant agriculture and the so-called social sector; in Poland - the sector of individual peasant agriculture, co-operative and state sectors (the two last mentioned will be called here the social sector).

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Table 1

Basic characteristics of the social sector
in Yugoslavia and Poland

Item	Yugoslavia	Poland
Share of arable land in social sector in overall agricultural arable land (%)	16	25.1
Share of social sector in overall agricultural production	25	20.8
Employment (in thousands)	198	946

1. Basic characteristics of peasant agriculture

In both countries the family agriculture plays a very significant role - over three fourths of land is owned by individual farmers. However, their farms are not very big with regard to their area size: in Yugoslavia ca. 2.5 million family farms cultivate ca. 8.3 million ha. of arable land (with the average farm size amounting to ca. 3.8 ha. of arable land); in Poland there are ca. 2.8 million peasant farms with an average size of ca. 5.4 ha. of arable land. In the analyzed countries, the present agrarian structure is based on solid historical foundations - in 19th and early 20th centuries capitalism was revealing underdevelopment features in these countries, which exerted a powerful impact on consolidation of small-scale commodity production in the national economies, and consolidation of the peasant stratum in the structure of the society.

This agrarian structure is usually considered to be inappropriate one in relation to possibilities offered for agriculture by technique (rational use of agricultural machines etc.). The structure is a little more favourable in Poland (especially as regards the number of bigger farms - over 10 ha.). The situation of farms in Yugoslavia is considerably aggravated by their atomization (on the average - 6 to 7 parcels per one farm).

Table 2

Peasant farms according to size of arable land
(in %)

Farm size	Yugoslavia	Poland
To 2 ha.*	39.0	30.0
2-5 ha.	35.6	29.3
5-10 ha.	19.8	25.6
Over 10 ha.	5.6	15.1

* In Yugoslavia the lower limit in farm size is 0.1 ha., while in Poland 0.5 ha. of arable land.

Simultaneously peasant agriculture in both countries is largely undercapitalized as regards agricultural production means, while the village is characterized with insufficient housing, institutional and cultural infrastructure, which is a basic cause of substantial differences between working and living conditions in the village and the town.

The above remarks indicated similarities in fundamental characteristics of agriculture in both countries; obviously there are also differences ensuing among others from varying features of the natural environment. Among more significant of them are slightly better production effects of peasant agriculture in Poland, being primarily a derivative of a little better agrarian structure and other variables mainly of the social nature.

It is economically and socially very significant that part-time farms represent a very substantial part of all peasant farms. The 1969 agricultural census in Yugoslavia revealed that part-time farms accounted for 42 per cent of all private farms. Since that time their number has considerably grown to reach about 60 per cent of the total number of farms. The part-time farms possess ca. 50 per cent of cultivated private land producing between 40 and 45 per cent of the overall private agri-

Table 3

Chosen production indices in Yugoslavia's and Poland's agriculture

Indices	Yugoslavia	Poland
Number of cattle (per 100 ha. of arable land)	38.5	62.4
Number of hogs (per 100 ha. of arable land)	55.3	97.7
Number of sheep per 100 ha.	51.9	20.5
Cow milk production per 1 inhabitant in kilograms	198	426
Production of eggs per 1 inhabitant in kilograms	10.2	13.6
Size of arable land per 1 tractor (ha.)	20.5	23.1
Use of artificial fertilizers per 1 ha. of arable land in kilograms	104.4	235.5
Grain crops from 1 ha. in quintals	33.6	24.9

Sources: Statistical Yearbooks of Yugoslavia and Poland for 1980-1981.

cultural production¹. According to some authors the entire private agriculture in Yugoslavia evolves in the direction of bi-professionalism. In Poland, about 26 per cent of all farms in 1974 were farms in which a head of the family was constantly employed outside the farm. Among them there were 500 000 farms over 2 ha., and 150 000 farms over 5 ha. These farms had at their disposal about 14 per cent of all privately-owned land. According to the data of the Chief Statistical Office, in 1974 3 million people in Poland had agricultural and nonagricultural sources of income at the same time, however, about 50 per cent

¹ See: Part-time Farm Households and Peasant-workers in Yugoslavia (in Serbian), Zagreb 1980.

were members of the farmer's family for their most part not working on the farm².

Irrespective of the procedure employed to estimate the scale of these processes, the phenomenon of biprofessionalism reached bigger dimensions in the Yugoslavian agriculture. It must exert its impact also on the volume of agricultural production. And although some authors³ claim that in the case of farms under 5 ha. work of their owners outside agriculture does not affect negatively the overall level of agricultural production, there are others⁴ who point out that farms of this type have their internal cycle connected with productive capacities, in which there occur phases of labour shortage causing a substantial decrease of agricultural production.

2. Disagrarisation processes

In the period after the Second World War, especially as a result of intensive industrialisation processes taking place in both countries there could be observed processes of abandoning work in agriculture by rural population. In Poland over the last thirty years the share of agricultural population in the entire population declined from about 50 per cent to 21.5 per cent in 1981. Simultaneously over the years 1945-1980 Yugoslavia witnessed one of the biggest (fastest) exoduses ever recorded in the history. The share of agricultural population declined from 73 per cent in 1945 to under 30 per cent in 1980⁵. By comparison, it is worth adding here that Sweden, USA or France needed ca. 90 years to achieve such a change in proportions between agricultural and nonagricultural population.

The process of abandoning agriculture was accompanied in

² M. K ł o d z i ń s k i, Bi-Professionalism in Farming (in Polish), "Wies i Rolnictwo" 1981, No 1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See: "Opredjeljenja" 1982, No 1, (Sarajevo).

⁵ For wider discussion see: V. P u l j i z, Exodus of Farmers (in Serbian), Zagreb 1977.

both countries by migration of rural population to towns. In the period under survey, the share of urban population in the overall number of inhabitants grew by about 25 per cent reaching the level of ca. 60 per cent in Poland and ca. 47 per cent in Yugoslavia. One common conclusion could be drawn here i.e. in both countries the rate of abandoning agriculture was faster than rate of migration from the village to the town; in this way a group of population making its livelihood outside agriculture was growing rapidly in the village (in the past the size of this group was quite insignificant).

The above mentioned process produced significant transformations in the demographic and social structure of agricultural population. It is commonly recognized both in Yugoslavia and in Poland that derivative changes include:

A. Process of aging of agricultural population since, first of all, young people abandon agriculture. S. Livada claims that biological core of agricultural population has been disturbed in Yugoslavia. At present, about 1.8 million farmers are over 60 years of age and 1.3 million over 65 years. Analysis of active members of peasant farms in 100 administrative communes of the Socialist Republic of Croatia revealed that their average age amounted to 59 years!⁶

In Poland in 1974 there were 35.9 per cent farms in which the main user was aged more than 55 years, in this number in farms with an area 0.5-2 ha. they represented as much as 54.1 per cent and in those over 15 ha. - 9 per cent. Farmers in the postproductive age accounted for about 26.6 per cent of all⁷. In 1981, per each 100 persons in the postproductive age there were 81.3 persons in the nonproductive age in the village (while in the town - 60.6 per cent). These figures testify to the outflow of youth from agriculture and their transfer to nonagricultural professions.

Deficit of highly competent labour is one of elements of bad productive conditions in many peasant farms.

⁶ S. L i v a d a, "Opredjeljenja" 1982, No 1, p. 7-13.

⁷ D. G a ł a j, Farming People (in Polish), "Polityka" 1979, No 24.

B. Process of feminization of peasant agriculture. In 1971, women represented on the average 57.8 per cent of the overall active agricultural population in Yugoslavia, and over 60 per cent in more developed regions. According to the data for 1969, 13.3 per cent of all agricultural farms were run exclusively by women. Vlado Puljiz writes that in the case of Yugoslavia we can't speak about a phenomenon of masculinization of agricultural labour⁸.

In Poland, per 100 ha. of arable land in peasant agriculture in 1974 (according to data of the Institute of Development of Village and Agriculture of the Polish Academy of Science) there were employed 31.7 persons, in this number 18.5 women and 13.2 men. At that time, women over 60 years of age represented over 10 per cent of main users of agricultural farms.

C. Relatively low level of qualifications of persons remaining in farms being a result of both advanced age of a part of farmers and the so-called "negative selection" i.e. the fact that more dynamic, talented and better educated young people more often than other young people give up working on their own farms abandoning agriculture, and very often migrating from the village to the town as well.

Summing up this part of the analysis, it should be stressed that the situation in peasant farming in both compared countries is far from satisfactory. In agricultural production there prevails the so-called marginal labour i.e. very young people and old people, which exerts a significant influence on low quality of "labour resources". The factor "land" - as it was already indicated is atomized, while the factor "means of production" is at an insufficient level. As a result, the level of peasant agriculture in both countries, way of working and living standards of farmers themselves are lower than in many other countries; they are also, on the average, lower than living standards of town inhabitants.

⁸ Puljiz, op. cit., p. 138.

3. Socio-political dimension of analysis

The above presented objective characteristics of the situation in peasant agriculture affect also the sphere of social life in the village. Some villages, in fact, die out physically (in Yugoslavia, out of the total number of 27 000 villages and settlements 21 000 recorded a radical drop in population number). Young people choosing to remain in agriculture have it difficult to find their partners (most often - wife). The institutional infrastructure in villages is insufficient in relation to needs and aspirations of the young generation. It is accompanied by poorly developed cultural infrastructure. Local self-management institutions display low activity (even in conditions of the Yugoslavia model peasants participate, to an insignificant degree, especially in supralocal representative structures). S. Livada states: "We tend to associate peasants quite a little with fundamental norms of social desires and aspirations. For example, self-management relationships in villages and agriculture as compared with traditions of villages are most underdeveloped. Consequently, old, archaic relations are preserved"⁹. In Poland, the situation of peasants on the macro scale is partly determined by existence of the peasants' party (United Peasants' Party), there are however major problems with local participation. The village and agriculture parallelly do not rank too high in the system of values in both societies although they are both largely of peasant origin.

What prerequisites - apart from historical ones - should be analyzed to disclose determinants of the situation in peasant agriculture in both countries? Of course, material capacities of the national economy are extremely important. However, there are other prerequisites, which only in part result from objective capacities of the state - these are principles of the agricultural policy and the place assigned to peasant agriculture in it. It seems that in agricultural policies of the analyzed

⁹ Livada, op. cit., p. 12.

countries throughout the entire postwar period, there could be observed a phenomenon of "vagueness" of objectives posed before peasant agriculture accompanied by short periods during which attempts at collectivization were made, which intensified the sense of threat and uncertainty of peasant farms. One of Yugoslavian sociologists expresses it in the following way: "...crisis of objectives in the village also ensues from the fact that after abandoning the forcible collectivization of agriculture [...] there is missing a well conceived policy with regard to the village that would determine principles of incorporating villages into the social division of labour in the long-term perspective, that would pave the way for socialization of production. [...] in the situation when an explicit policy of development of the village is absent [...] the land is lying waste, while agricultural population has no guarantee that its incomes will be equal to incomes from nonagricultural activity in the town"¹⁰.

In fact, after resigning from collectivization agriculture has been, time and again, afforded more favourable conditions for development, however, in practice they have never matched the real needs. The last few years (and a serious food crisis) create certain possibilities and afford bigger guarantees for development of peasant agriculture. Among others there is guaranteed equality of all agricultural sectors in the agricultural policy; it has been resolved to introduce a Stipulation to the Constitution about permanence of peasant ownership; finally allocation of bigger resources for agriculture - all seem to be a desirable direction of activity.

Could there be thus indicated any general difference between peasant agriculture in both countries? The situation of peasant agriculture in Yugoslavia seems to be more complex. V. Puljiz simply does not see any possibility of developing peasant agriculture through the so-called farmers' way (in the sense of family farms) due to the fact that demographic processes in the village along with part-time farming create objectively unfavou-

¹⁰ S. Š u v a r, From Out-of-the-Way Village and Big Town (in Serbian), Zagreb 1973, p. 140-143.

nable circumstances - the number of farmers ready to expand their farms is very small while most of them have no successors. Briefly speaking, there are very few vital peasant farms. On the other hand, he sees the future of agriculture in the so-called collectivization of work and its socialization, and in development of the social sector¹¹.

Recently, in both countries due to economic dislocations much hope is placed with growth of agricultural production achieved also in peasant farming.

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PRZEMIANY ROLNICTWA CHŁOPSKIEGO W JUGOSŁAWII I W POLSCE

W artykule podjęto zagadnienie porównania wybranych cech społeczno-ekonomicznej sytuacji wsi i rolnictwa chłopskiego w Jugosławii i w Polsce.

System ustrojowy w analizowanych krajach opiera się na zasadach socjalizmu (w Jugosławii "socjalizmu samorządowego"). Bardzo podobna jest (zaś odmienna niż w innych państwach socjalistycznych) struktura form własności ziemi - ca 80% gruntów pozostaje w rękach indywidualnych gospodarstw chłopskich; gospodarstwa te są stosunkowo małe pod względem obszaru: średnia wielkość w Jugosławii - 3,8 ha, w Polsce - 5,4 ha. W obu krajach istniejąca struktura agrarna ma swoje mocne podłoże historyczne - w wieku XIX i początkach XX w. kapitalizm wykazywał tam cechy niedorozwoju, co ze szczególną siłą powodowało utrwalenie się struktury drobnotowarowej w gospodarce narodowej, a warstwy chłopskiej - w strukturze społeczeństwa.

W okresie po II wojnie światowej, w wyniku intensywnych procesów industrializacji, zachodzą w obu krajach duże procesy deagraryzacji; w Jugosławii w ciągu trzydziestu lat udział ludności rolniczej wśród ogółu zmniejszył się z 73% do 28,5%, zaś w Polsce z ok. 50% do 21,5% w roku 1981. Towarzyszył temu proces migracji ludności wiejskiej do miast - w latach 1948-1981 o ok. 25% wzrósł odsetek ludności miejskiej w analizowanych krajach.

Procesy deagraryzacji wywołały w obu krajach te same procesy pochodne, tj.:

- 1) starzenie się ludności rolniczej, albowiem odchodzą z rolnictwa przede wszystkim ludzie młodzi;
- 2) feminizację rolnictwa chłopskiego wyrażającą się w przewadze kobiet nad mężczyznami w gospodarce chłopskiej (zwłaszcza w

¹¹ V. P u l j i z, "Opredjeljenja" 1982, No 1, p. 153-154.

starszych grupach wiekowych, w młodszych zaś jest odwrotnie, co też jest poważnym problemem ekonomicznym i społecznym);

3) niski stosunkowo poziom kwalifikacji osób pozostających na gospodarstwie, wynikający zarówno z zaawansowanego wieku części rolników, jak i z tzw. "negatywnej selekcji", tj. z faktu, że młodzież lepiej wykształcona częściej niż pozostała odchodzi z rolnictwa.

Z procesami wyżej wskazanymi współwystępowały:

a) zjawisko "niedookreślonych" celów stawianych przed rolnictwem chłopskim przez politykę rolną (ważny aspekt ideologiczny);

b) brak obiektywnych przesłanek realizacji efektywnej produkcji rolnej (deficyt środków produkcji itp.);

c) traktowanie rolnictwa de facto jako "gorszego" sektora gospodarki (tak w sferze ekonomicznej, jak i społecznej); więc praca w rolnictwie i wieś zajmowały odległe miejsce w systemie wartości społecznych.

W rezultacie tych procesów rolnictwo chłopskie w analizowanych krajach znalazło się w impasie, co odzwierciedliło się bezpośrednio w znacznie niższej, w stosunku do swych potencjalnych możliwości, produkcji rolnej.

W ostatnim okresie czasu w obu krajach na skutek kłopotów gospodarczych duże nadzieje wiąże się ze wzrostem produkcji rolnej, odmiennie jednak - jak się wydaje - postrzega się perspektywy rozwojowe rolnictwa chłopskiego.