

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

THE CUNNING OF CLASS:
URBANIZATION OF INEQUALITY
IN POST-WAR POLAND

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Kacper Pobłocki

Budapest, 15 January 2010

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NOTE: All attached photographs were taken by the author in May 2009

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Earlier drafts of various parts of this dissertation have been presented and discussed at several occasions.

First, in October 2008 I presented a long and a rather experimental paper that later became divided into various chapters of Part Two and Three at the colloquium held at the CEU’s Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology. I am thankful to both the fellow students and the faculty for their comments and suggestions. A year later I

presented Chapter Four at the very same occasion, and again, it was a very useful exercise and I am thankful for that opportunity.

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ABSTRACT:

This is a *longue durée* study of urbanization in Poland. Urbanization is not understood here as an automatic or autonomous social and/or spatial process but rather as an outcome of social struggles and the workings of class. The very first episode in the Polish history of urbanization occurred during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when intensified contacts with European capitalism, at the time largely centered around the Italian city states, brought Poland into the orbit of long-distance market exchange. That encounter, expressed in the political culture of the Renaissance, brought economic growth, urban expansion and relative prosperity of the three main estates: gentry, peasantry and burgers. Soon, however, due to a mechanism of “opportunity hoarding” one of them, the gentry, gained an upper hand in relation to the others, mainly through their political mobilization of space. As a result, a social system based upon cash crops production, referred to here as “merchant feudalism” was established. Gradually Poland’s social structure was becoming dual – centered around the grain production, and comprised a ruling class, the gentry, and unskilled laborers on their estates, the serfs, often referred to as the *chamstwo*. Burgers were crowded out, and the period between the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries was one of an urban and economic decline. In that era, *chamstwo* was a racial category, derived from a “localization” of the Biblical “curse of Ham.” Although Poland’s merchant feudalism eventually melted into air, and from the mid nineteenth century new material landscapes emerged as a consequence of ensuing industrial urbanization, the class structures that were set in place during Poland’s initial “encounter” with capitalism loomed large. The curse of Ham structured the growth of “Poland’s Manchester,” the city of Łódź, although now it ceased being a strictly racial category and was more related to ethnicity. That second phase of expansion of capitalism in Poland, lasting roughly between the 1860s and the 1960s, was eclipsed by urbanization. Still until 1939, places like Łódź constituted industrial/urban islands in a largely agricultural ocean. Only after 1956 did Poland begun to urbanize in earnest. Again, *chamstwo* remained the key class instrument that structured that process. Gradually, it lost its former racial/ethnic connotations, and no longer denoted a specific social group. Instead, it became psychologized, and today it is the central notion used to describe uncouth, disrespectful, and/or boorish behavior in public, mainly urban, space. Through *chamstwo*, I argue, the extant class structures also dictated the terms of the third moment of material expansion of capitalism in Poland – post-war urbanization.

Part One of this study describes the first two moments of expansion of capitalism in Poland, the social origins of *chamstwo*, the struggles that surrounded its “localization” and explains why this particular Biblical story became so suitable for making class

structures in Poland. It also describes how nineteenth century industrialization, exemplified by the rise of the textile city of Łódź, did not undermine but rather strengthened the class structures of the Polish *ancien régime* and its anti-urban character. Part Two opens with a discussion of how the world of the *ancien régime* came to an end during World War Two. It describes the spontaneous mass movement from the country to the city following 1945, and how gradually the old social divisions were reborn on a new turf. The very first post-war decade was marked by intense struggles over the right to the city and intensive mixing of various groups and milieus in the city. Only after 1956 did investments into urban built environment begun in earnest, and in Part Three I describe how the fear of physical proximity, the “secret” of modern *chamstwo*, spurred forms of material separation that could be observed in projects of urban renewal, suburbanization, proto-gentrification and remaking of the city center that took place during the period I refer to as “the long 1960s” (1956-1976). Because the long 1960s were followed by protracted crisis, lasting from 1981 to 2003, Polish cities, I argue, were largely shaped during that period.

Urbanization in Poland has been therefore Janus-faced. On the one hand, from a *longue durée* perspective and in the light of the centuries of (socially-induced) urban decline and enduring separation of most of the population from the city, Poland’s post-1945 urbanization was indeed a momentous phenomenon, although this was an unintended rather than intended consequence of the authorities’ policies. On the other hand, however, the central role of *chamstwo* in the urbanization of Poland shows that every attempt to break away with the past was actually enveloped by the deep-seated class structures, and represented such a break only in the most superficial (external, material) manner. This astonishingly protean nature of *chamstwo*, its ability to adapt to new circumstances and the fact that it constantly reinvented itself throughout history and socio-economic systems is what I call the cunning of class.



Photograph One – the building designated for David Lynch's post-production studio

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INTRODUCTION

This study describes how class lays at the very heart of spatiality and temporality of uneven development. My understanding of the former is derived from the theory of uneven geographical development, as developed by Neil Smith. Smith successfully merged two strands in that theorizing, one following Trotsky's notion of combined and uneven development (mainly in the world systems analysis school), and the other stemming from Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey's work on urbanization. My aim is to add a third dimension to that theory – that is of temporal uneven development. My understanding of the temporality of uneven development combines Giovanni Arrighi's model of historical capitalism and Ernst Bloch's philosophy of history, and his notion of nonsynchronism. The interplay between class as well as spatial and temporal uneven development constitutes what I call the "cunning of class" – a process wherein class forces structure human interaction in time and space but remain external to it, and are not the subject of political contention. Class works by cutting across various temporal and spatial scales, through a process of creative fragmentation and through engendering new totalities. Likewise, this study cuts across various temporal and spatial scales. My temporal framework is a combination of the *longue durée* perspective, spanning over half a millennium, and a close study of a relatively short historical period, referred to here as the "long 1960s." My spatial framework is both global and very local, shifting between historical geography of West-centered capitalism and projects of urban renewal and the like in a Polish city of Łódź. The method chosen for this study is intended to describe the elusive subject of class and its two, only apparently contradictory, facets: theoretical and

historical, abstract and concrete. My main “protagonist” in this study is a class notion of *chamstwo*. I describe how it structured the three major moments of material development of capitalism in Poland: the feudal grain-producing economy (16th to mid 19th centuries), a century of industrialization (1860s-1960s), and post-war urbanization (1960s-now). In all of these moments *chamstwo* was simultaneously present and absent – and my major aim is to explain that contradiction, constituting, in my view, the very cunning of class.

The quotidian experience of the cunning of class is actually very ephemeral and the task of analyzing it – quite daunting. This largely historical study is aimed at explaining *chamstwo* – a word used in Poland to describe rude behavior in public space. It is, as all urban phenomena, a very elusive subject, and it goes largely unnoticed in the daily experience of the city. Because I have lived most of my adult life abroad, whenever I came back to Poland I was always struck by the violent ways Poles related to one another in urban public space. Of course it was not direct violence – but all the small things that make the urban experience enervating, stressful and unpleasant. Bonhomie in contacts between strangers is hard to find in Poland. I grew increasingly obsessed by the need to explain where all this came from, but it took me a very long time to find adequate methodological tools for that. After all, it is difficult to back up an argument that, for example, bus drivers in other countries are inclined to wait a few seconds if they see somebody running from a distance and trying to catch the bus, while in Poland drivers would deliberately not let people in and in fact derive joy from shutting the doors, driving away and leaving the angry passengers behind. One can, as for example Erving Goffman did, describe such urban games of deference and demeanor, but it is difficult to move beyond circumstantial evidence, anecdotes and impressions. Such accounts, as Richard Sennett brilliantly put it, give “a picture of society in which there are scenes but no plot.”¹ In order to find that plot I had to make a historical detour, reaching back to the sixteenth century. The point is that this plot is the central component of a larger story – class, capitalism, and the way it operates through uneven development.

As it is often the case, the idea for the current form of this study originates in a failure. I began this project in 2004. As it turned out later, and as the reader will see in Chapter Nine, it was a transitional moment, and in many ways an end point of a longer historical period that, in my view, started with the “Polish crisis” of 1979-1981. Inspired by a handful of works in the social sciences rejecting the quintessentially 1990s conviction that history has ended and that the *annus mirabilis* of 1989 constituted a major watershed in world history, and disenchanted by most works on Poland and state socialism plagued by both methodological nationalism and overrepresentation of political history (at the expense of social, economic, urban and other perspectives), I sought to do a local study and by doing so to tell a different story. The choice of Łódź

¹ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 36.

was more than obvious: no other place in Poland was as starkly absent in national narratives, although at that point I did not have a clear answer why this was so. Łódź was, after all, the largest city with a Polish population after Warsaw (and Chicago). Although it was a typical “second city,” its status in Poland was not comparable to that of Chicago, Barcelona, Milan, Osaka, Shanghai or St. Petersburg – other “second cities” struggling with the domination of national capitals.

The only comparable case that approximates the place of Łódź in the Polish consciousness is that of Toledo, Ohio in the American imagination, as in John Denver’s song line: “Saturday night in Toledo, Ohio is like being nowhere at all.”² Łódź’s peculiar absence in the Polish culture can be summarized by a somehow crude but apt phrase from a trailer of a recent film: “Poland is like a giant arse” the narrator says, referring to the country’s relatively circular territory and playing on a double meaning of the word “hole” in Polish – denoting both a cavity and hicksville. “There is a hole in its middle. And that hole is Łódź.”³ Part of Łódź’s predicament stemmed from it being a former industrial town – often referred to in the past as “Poland’s Manchester.” But, as I was to realize relatively early on, this was only a fraction of the story. Other cities, for example Krakow, had actually more people employed in industry, and hence were, at least in theory, more “industrial” than Łódź. It gradually became clear to me, and I hope it will become equally evident to the reader, that Łódź represented a textbook case of an exception that confirms the rule. And that rule is the central place of class in both the Polish past and present.

I started my research by embarking on a classic ethnographic study. I moved to Łódź in September 2005 and lived there till June 2006. I grew up in the western part of Poland, that during the nineteenth century was part of Germany. Łódź, that was the Manchester of the Russian Empire, was in many ways a foreign country to me – also because I spend altogether less than a week in Łódź before I decided to write my dissertation about it. Consequently, during my stay in Łódź I spend most of my time on touring the city and getting to know its material structure, as well as talking to the people. In the early Spring I realized that this method of research was not giving me answers to the questions that kept pestering me. Most importantly, I had a suspicion that human memory was selective and that, due to a mechanism of “collective forgetting,” most narratives of the socialist past were overdetermined by the experience of the 1980s and especially of the spectacular post-1989 implosion that was nearly nowhere as tragic and spectacular as in Łódź.

Because the stories I was collecting were surprisingly alike, or could be easily classified into a handful of narrative types, I had a feeling that something important was missing. I sensed that the “people” were wrong – but not because they were, as the neo-liberal

² I am grateful to Karl Hall for suggesting that parallel.

³ *Absolute Beginner* (Aleja główniarzy, Piotr Szczepański, Poland, 2007).

elites maintained at the time, mesmerized by political charlatans who lulled them into nostalgia for the beautiful socialist past that never was and hence averted from facing the “real” challenges of the present, but because they operated in fields of power that fundamentally reshaped even the most personal accounts and memories. The first narrative type, the ironic, usually described state socialism as an ersatz, unreal social system, where everything was up-side down and nothing worked. The other narrative type, the tragic, usually describes the oppressive nature of state socialism (also its urban facet), and usually the interlocutor describes the many ways in which their life would have been better had they not lived under the Communist yoke. Both types, of course, have their counter-narratives: the ironic mode is “debunked” by the argument that now everything is in tatters while under socialism “at least some things worked,” while the tragic type is usually appeased by a tongue-in-cheek accounts of how the “terror” was not real but only a game played by the authorities.⁴ In fact, as I lived the very first nine years of my life under state socialism, I also remember the shortages, long lines, and the green Cuban oranges some people were lucky to have for Christmas. I also remember the socialist primary school, in which we sang military songs and were tightly supervised by our teachers during the breaks. But I suspected that there was more to state socialism than just that. Precisely for that reason I found most of those who were older than me and who lived an important part of their adulthood in socialism unsatisfying conversation partners; because they “saw it with their own eyes” they generally shut out the thought that their personal memories, however “true” they were, might have become partial and selective.

The salience of understanding what was socialism was straightforward at that time: state socialism, especially in the mainstream media discourse, was described as the very opposite of capitalism; socialism was the past that constituted the very opposite of the present.⁵ It was omnipresent in the capitalist reality in another sense too: some places (and some people) were often described as being persistently “socialist” despite the rapid social changes underway. Łódź was among Poland’s “socialist spots,” and indeed the post-communist party typically received large numbers of votes in there. But the people of Łódź were far from succumbing to escapist nostalgia. In fact, what happened in the 1990s in Łódź could have been hoisted by the neoliberals as the showcase of the transition to capitalism, or what was understood as capitalism at the time: grassroots economic initiative and entrepreneurial spirit. After the final collapse of state-run large textile and apparel enterprises, many people in Łódź started their own firms, opened small workshops in basements and garages, or repaired their falling incomes by trading in all sorts of goods on open air markets – typical landmarks of the “transition.” But

⁴ I described this in greater detail in: Kacper Poblocki, “The Economics of Nostalgia: Socialist Films and Capitalist Commodities in Contemporary Poland,” in *Past for the Eyes: East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums After 1989*, ed. Oksana Sarkisova and Péter Apor (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 181-214.

⁵ For more on the oppositions between socialism and capitalism and the official discourse see: Michal. Buchowski, “The Specter of Orientalism in Europe: From Exotic Other to Stigmatized Brother,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (2006): 463-482.

Łódź's entrepreneurial ex-workers were not the darlings of Polish neoliberals. What is more, what I saw in Łódź was a gradual crowding out of such potential "pioneers" of capitalism. I therefore noticed that the prevailing description of capitalism was just as misleading as the dominant memory of socialism.

A lot of my ethnographic fieldwork was spent around an open air market that was then being closed down. The official reason for the closure was a partially EU-funded "modernization" project that turned a sidewalk next to a church and an open air market for nearly thirty years into a two-lane motorway. The market was in fact not as much closed down but only "moved" – into a less central area but where the people were allowed to build a "proper" market with metal stalls and a roof. But it was clear back then, and especially to those who did everything they could to stop the "improvement," that not everybody would be able to afford it. The major argument against the move was actually very resonant with a typical *laissez-faire* rhetoric: markets should be free and accessible to everybody and not controlled by a small group. The improvement hit especially those who were veritable economic *bricoleurs*, and who made their living by doing many often dissociated jobs (hence, ideal candidates for a "flexible" postmodern worker), like a lady who used to be a secretary in an apparel firm, and now except for cleaning houses and renting her late parents' tiny apartment, also sold cheap Chinese-made kitchenware on that market. She also turned towards other goods in different consumer seasons, such as elaborate wreaths she made at home from pine twigs and sold with great success around All Saints Day – the day when many Poles visit graves of their relatives. Those who back then were referred to as "transition losers," and the people crowded out by the infrastructural improvement were to join their ranks, turned out not to be people wedded to an old way of life, or unable to adapt, but actually many of the first to embrace the new reality. So I saw that there was a clear dissonance between what people believed capitalism was about (free market, flexibility, and entrepreneurial spirit) and how it actually worked on the ground.

As I was to learn later, and as the reader will see often in this study, there were many similar incidents in the past; the struggle between ordinary denizens and the authorities over the use of the city, and the elimination of an *ad hoc* and grassroots usage of public space (including street hawking) was one of the central themes in Łódź's past, and is one of the leitmotifs of this study. I could not have known this, however, only from listening to the people. Also, I was growing increasingly worried that my knowledge of the city was both expanding and becoming increasingly fragmented. I was both inclined to spend more time around the open air market so I gain more insights and alarmed that my focus is too narrow and important stories in other parts of the city are escaping my attention. I understood that urban anthropology – that I initially set out to do – was not simply ethnographic study done in a city. In other words, I realized that I needed to find another epistemic scale – because the one I operated on was not allowing me to grasp the urban phenomenon in its totality. Without knowing this at the time, I thus ran into the central methodological problem in urban studies.

As I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter One, this problem was faced already by Friedrich Engels in his classic study of Victorian Manchester. Also, Manuel Castells' *The Urban Question* as well as the work of Henri Lefebvre were largely devoted to the conundrum of how to go about researching the elusive urban phenomenon. Castells and Lefebvre argued that the prevailing intellectual division of labor tends to cut cities into separate (study-able) pieces. Both authors concluded that the existing intellectual division of labor cannot grasp the urban phenomenon and argued that our knowledge is actually compartmentalized in such a way that the urban phenomenon slips in between the borderlines of academic disciplines and their bodies of knowledge. My intention was to place the urban phenomenon at the very center of my analysis. For that I had to not really invent a new methodology (that is too daunting a task) but rather to combine various bodies of knowledge in order to piece together the urban fragments. More importantly, the problems I faced were also the daily bread of historical research. One of the most elementary rules in history can be summarized thus: one's story is largely determined by one's sources. In other words, in order to tell a new story one needs to find a new source, or turn up a body of knowledge that is largely unused, also because it is at the time regarded as creditless or flawed. I therefore decided to move away from pure ethnography and/or "oral history" towards written sources hoping that these would shed some more light on the questions that I wanted to answer.⁶

That move, however, did not solve all my problems. I begun by consulting official documents from the history of the city and its environs, printed throughout the post-war period, and by reading works already published. I did a preliminary archival survey in Łódź as well as in Warsaw, where files of the ministry of light and textile industry were located. I soon realized that these sources, however insightful they might be, were also very fragmentary. Also I wanted to write about the city as a whole, and not only about its industry. Moreover, there was a number of recent works on economic history of Polish state socialism, written by young historians for whom just like for me the socialist past was not a personal but purely intellectual matter, and I decided to rely on secondary sources in industrial history. This was also dictated by the fact that archives of individual socialist enterprises were in a deplorable condition. Many documents, especially originals, were missing; most others were not very revealing. Paradoxically, as one Polish historian put it, "because of the initial abundance of documents," and later archival chaos "we might be left with less valuable sources [on state socialist enterprises] than on eighteenth century manufactures."⁷

I also resisted the trap of relying primarily upon municipal archives. This is a rather common strategy in urban history – but one based upon a crucial fallacy. It assumes that

⁶ For a recent argument in favor of a historically-minded account of the daily experience of capitalism see: Susana Narotzky and Gavin A Smith, *Immediate Struggles: People, Power, and Place in Rural Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁷ Andrzej Jezierski quoted in: Maciej Tymiński, *PZPR I Przedsiębiorstwo: Nadzór Partyjny Nad Zakładami Przemysłowymi 1956-1970*, W Krainie PRL (Warszawa: Trio, 2001), 13.

municipal institutions are synonymous with the city. This is, however, not the case. The city as a living social organism is not coextensive with its administrative institutions, and cannot be reduced to them. The major inspiration that eventually helped me to overcome my methodological puzzles and identify a source that allowed me to look at the city as a whole and to glue together all the fragmentary stories I collected so far was Stephen Kotkin's *Magnetic Mountain*. In theory, Kotkin embarked on a mad venture – he described the rise of the Soviet steel town, Magnitogorsk, during the 1920s and 1930s largely on the basis of local newspapers. I grew up in the 1990s believing that the institution of censorship effectually blotted out any forms of dissidence, and that the totalitarian authorities controlled the public life and imbued it with propaganda. To be sure, Magnitogorsk was not a third-rank small town in provincial Russia, where the grip of censors would be weak. It was, after all, Soviet's most cherished steel town, also by Stalin who was, after all, the man of steel (his bust was the very first product cast in Magnitogorsk furnaces). Kotkin's work was the very first one that comprehensively reached beyond the typical cold-war clichés and trite dichotomies (socialism versus capitalism, state versus civil society, planned versus market economy and the like) and that showed a very different picture of the past. Kotkin's success was in part a consequence of his local focus and his rejection of methodological nationalism but it also stemmed from the way he tapped a source so far usually discredited out of hand. If, I thought, Soviet newspapers, also from the years of the Great Terror, were valuable sources of information on city life, then I might just as well find this in post-Stalinist Poland. This turned out to be true.

What Kotkin's book demonstrated is that local journalism can be used as a veritable archive of the city – an archive, highly selective of course, but nonetheless much richer in detail on everyday life and the vernacular experience of the city, also because it is written for the urban public. This archive is updated on a regular basis, and the stories it tells are usually intended to bridge the various fragmentary urban worlds and create a sense of urban unity. In other words, the very existence of local journalism is a portend of the making of the urban scale and turning the city into a (relatively) coherent organism. Just as national newspapers, as in Benedict Andersons' classic study, created a sense of imagined national community, local newspapers created a sense of coherence around the urban scale.⁸ It allowed denizens to imagine other urbanites in places that they did not have direct or personal access to. A single incident, such as a tramway accident, for example, became a city-wide event precisely by being reported in a local newspaper. The fact that Łódź had to wait a century after the beginning of its rapid growth to have a local weekly devoted mainly to its own affairs was very telling – only after 1956, as I will discuss later, did it start functioning as a coherent urban organism. Also, the fact that since 1991 there has been no such magazine is highly signifying, showing the deep contemporary urban and social fragmentation.

⁸ Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991).

I was very fortunate to find a brilliant source that informs much of this study. Except for regular dailies, between 1958 and 1991 a weekly magazine was published in Łódź; after reading some of its first issues I knew that I found what I was looking for. The magazine's title, *Odgłosy*, is very revealing about its content. *Odgłosy* means echoes, or reflected voices, suggesting that the magazine reported on what was being "heard" or "said" in the city. Its first editorial team comprised of three journalists and two literati – also a telling detail. From its very beginning, *Odgłosy* was trying to combine the high and low, the popular with the refined. It printed comics, science fiction stories, crime novels in parts, reviews of television programs next to poetry debuts, reviews of theater plays and reports on party plenums. It was the very opposite of contemporary magazines that are targeted at very specific and narrow audiences. *Odgłosy* was very general, a real mish-mash of topics and issues. Its articles on automobiles and reports of soccer games were written by a woman – something difficult to find today in "auto" and sport magazines. It sent correspondents abroad (who reported, for example, from the decolonizing Ghana) – also something difficult to imagine today for a local magazine. One of the typical articles in *Odgłosy* was industrial reportage – again, nowadays journalists do not have immediate access to enterprises; back then, it was enough to show your journalists' card and you were allowed to talk to everybody you wanted, and the management would also show you the documents. Although *Odgłosy* had a fairly stable editorial team, it often printed invited articles, or organized discussions on certain subjects (for example "crisis of the family") in which various experts were presenting their viewpoints. Also, it often printed interviews with people such as urban planners or architects, or printed editorial discussions between a number of specialists in a given field. Of course *Odgłosy* had its better and worse times. At its peak moments it sold up to 100,000 copies weekly, mainly thanks to popular novels printed in fragments every week. In its nadir, the official circulation was around 10,000 copies, but much of that was returned to the publisher.⁹

Reading a weekly magazine had one crucial advantage over local dailies – *Odgłosy* usually did not provide very fragmented information typical of press clippings, and it reported on what had happened in the city in the previous week only if something truly important occurred and the editors felt compelled to join in a discussion. Instead, it printed a lot of articles known in Poland as reportage (*reportaż*) – feature articles, at least one A3 page long, usually devoted to one subject. The usefulness of reportage for urban history is that they are rich in detail and often very descriptive while maintaining an analytic and synthetic twist; reportage is both a journalistic and a literary form. It describes reality but also interprets it. The undisputed master of that *genre* in Poland was Ryszard Kapuściński – whose travel books on Africa, Latin America and Asia have been widely acclaimed and translated into many languages. Kapuściński, undoubtedly a talented man, was part of a larger echelon of authors, writing reportage on all sorts of topics. Most of them never attained Kapuściński's level of craft, but a figure like him

⁹ Edmund Lewandowski (interview), Konrad Frejdllich (interview), Eugeniusz Iwanicki (interview).

would have been impossible without the immense popularity of reportage in Poland. The many other *reportażysta*, reportage writers, left a very rich heritage. Part of that heritage is to be found in magazines such as *Odgłosy*.

Reading a weekly allowed me to move faster under my time constraints than if I read a daily. I decided to read the all the issues of *Odgłosy* instead of focusing on a shorter period and supplementing the reading of the weekly with local dailies for one more reason. I expected that if I can “get to know” most of the authors, then it will be easier for me to distinguish between true and false information. After all, all media was back then subject to censorship. This proved to be indeed the case. It became relatively easy for me after a while to distinguish between the “official” and “personal” registers of the various authors – something which became crucial for interpreting such tragic events as the anti-Semitic purges in March 1968, in which the mass media were heavily involved. Also, having finished the read (this took me a year and a half), I interviewed those who wrote for *Odgłosy* and could still be contacted (as well as were interested in talking). These conversations confirmed the impression I got – that censors’ grip over *Odgłosy* was at best meek. My interviewees could not recall a single incident when an article, previously approved by the editors, was blocked (censors worked in the printing houses and gave newspapers or magazines the final approval just before these went straight to print). Of course articles were being rejected, but because *Odgłosy*’s archives did not survive the post-1989 commotion, I was unable to establish if there was any pattern in that.

When discussing the putative lack of “freedom of speech” in state socialism one has to bear in mind that censorship was not an invention of the Communists. It functioned during the interwar regime, as well as before 1918. In fact, what stands out is not the presence of censorship in state socialism but its contemporary *absence* – in Poland’s modern history, only after 1989 there was no censorship. The fact that the interwar press also had to be approved by censors did not inhibit historians from using that source. In fact, one of leading Polish historians, and the co-author of *The Black Book of Communism*, wrote a number of studies on the Second Republic Poland based entirely on press.¹⁰ When writing on state socialism, however, like most others he uses nearly exclusively Party or secret services archives, as if these were the only “truthful” sources on Poland’s post-war past and the rest was “propaganda” or “lies.” Of course one will never find direct attacks on the Soviet Union in *Odgłosy*; but one will find a lot of criticism, especially pertaining to local matters – which was my major interest. Except

¹⁰ Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa Codzienna Warszawy W Latach 1918-1939*, (Warszawa: Państw. Instytut Wydawniczy, 1983); Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918-1939* (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1971); Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa I Społeczność Polska We Francji W Latach 1920-1940*, (Wrocław: Zakł. Nar. im. Ossolińskich, 1979); Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa Polityczna Ruchu Ludowego: 1918-1939* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1970); Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa Polonijna W Latach 1870-1939: Zarys Problematyki* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1977); Andrzej Paczkowski, *Prasa Polska W Latach 1918-1939* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1980).

for some moments of intense political tensions (such as the period between March and October 1968), when indeed every word printed in the official media was carefully chosen, there was an astonishing space for a critical perspective. Criticism was actually inscribed in that system – feedback was intended to be the basis for improvement. Hence the salience of reportage as well as the so-called “intervention journalism” (*dziennikarstwo interwencyjne*).¹¹ In fact my impression was that only those whose power is uncertain or disputed might be interested in controlling everything that is being said. Those who are secure in their power may allow themselves for relatively open criticism – because it does not undermine their position. And as the popularity of the regime was steadily on the rise until 1980, and because before the *Solidarność* carnival there was no real alternative to state socialism, criticism was widespread and official because it was relatively harmless. Illegal printing houses, persecution of dissidence, the samizdat and blatant propaganda on state television, as well as the increasing importance of the secret services, was mainly the 1980s issue, when state socialism was struggling for survival and/or searching for exit routes.

A Western reader who has some idea about Poland may be struck by three things in this study. First, there is very little discussion on religion and Catholicism here, although Poles are, the cliché goes, Catholics above all. Indeed, the Catholic Church has been the most stable institution operating on the Polish territories, and in many historical moments has served as the substitute for the state. Yet, its interest in the everyday life of its parishioners and especially the urban ones is a relatively new phenomenon. Still in the early 1960s masses were held in Latin, and not vernacular. The clergy “discovered” the working class only in the late 1970s, and became fully interested in its evangelization only during the 1980s. It is often overlooked that in the period between 1945 and 1989 (and especially during the 1970s and 1980s), more churches were built in Poland than in the entire millennium preceding it. In the wake of the 1905 revolution in Łódź, for example, its parishes were gigantic and overpopulated. Holy Cross Parish in the inner-city, for example, numbering 142,000 souls was served only by eight clergymen.¹² Because my temporal interest lays elsewhere (in the period of the long 1960s), the Catholic church is relatively insignificant for the story I wish to tell here.

Second, the reader may be surprised to read relatively little about “socialism” in this study. Although I initially set out to write about state socialism, I increasingly grew aware of the danger of “othering” it, picturing as a social system *fundamentally* different to capitalism, and “incarcerating,” to borrow Arjun Appadurai’s phrase, socialism in one world region, country, city, or building.¹³ Although when I started my fieldwork in Łódź, socialism was still largely reified as the eschatological opposite of

¹¹ Konrad Frejdllich, ed., *Uśmiech Ariadny: Antologia Reportażu łódzkiego* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1975), 12.

¹² Robert Blobaum, *Rewolucja: Russian Poland, 1904-1907* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 237.

¹³ See: Arjun Appadurai, “Putting Hierarchy in Its Place,” *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (February 1988): 36-49.

capitalism, very soon the dominant picture changed. In the wake of the EU accession, inflow of foreign direct investment, takeover of an increasing number of market niches by large multinational corporations, and “modernization” projects such as the open air market clearance I described above, an increasing number of people, and especially corporate “drop-outs,” i.e. who left multinationals because they could no longer endure their stressful working environment, started drawing parallels between state socialism and contemporary capitalism. The key similarity was their bureaucratic large-scale nature, making the individual human not more than a mere cog in the machine. “In hindsight,” one of them recalled, “the worst thing [about working for multinationals] was its fictitious and absurd character; the mindless and pointless tasks that absorb a lot of time and energy and that I had more and more of.”¹⁴ Such parallels were actually drawing, as I discovered later, on a view that for decades was much more widespread and established that the reification of socialism and capitalism into incommensurable universes – the hallmark and the heritage of the 1980s Cold War rhetoric. The key word here is “convergence.”

Even the staunch critic of the Soviet Union and the author of a “non-communist manifesto,” Walt Rostow, argued in his classic study on stages of economic development that the Soviet Union had only a few years to “catch up” with the United States. Because the Soviet block was immune to the 1930s crisis, as well as initially seemed to be immune to the 1970s crisis, until 1980 (and events in Poland were a key turning point) it was generally believed that the Soviets were actually more skilled than the Americans in transcending the British-style market capitalism.¹⁵ This study revisits the convergence thesis but with a number of caveats. First of all, I suggest to read the Cold War rivalry in terms of uneven development. Rostow’s linear model of economic development was an expression of a deeply ingrained popular conviction that competition between the Soviet Union and the United States was a matter of “catching up and overtaking,” in the sense that both countries were placed upon on a single temporal thread, only that US was slightly “in front” whereas the Soviet block was slightly lagging “behind.” I follow a different tradition, most recently best exemplified by the work of Giovanni Arrighi, that looks at “backward” territories not as ones prior in time (hence reflecting the “past” of the advanced places) but external in space. In other words, the two superpowers were inserted in a different slot in the world economy. That geographical sensitivity to the convergence theory is my first modification. Second, I place the Soviet-American rivalry in the context of what Arrighi described as cyclical struggles for world hegemony and cyclical geographical power shifts between the old and the new leader of the world economy. If Arrighi’s argument about the falling importance of the United States and the rise of East Asia, and especially of the People’s Republic of China, will turn out to be true, then indeed the rumors about the death of

¹⁴ Edyta Gietka, Paweł Walewski, “Transformersi są zmęczeni” *Polityka* (16 December 2005).

¹⁵ David C Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003).

state socialism were premature – only that it was not the Soviet but the Chinese model that proved to be victorious in the long run. The current economic crisis seems to suggest that the United States failed just as the Soviet Union did – only its implosion was more stretched in time and its debacle had a slightly different dynamic.

The major difference between the two superpowers was their geographical position in the world economy. That position also entailed a different spatial heritage, and hence differing internal social structures. This study combines such global visions of capitalist development with a very local perspective. One of my arguments is that such grand and dramatic turns of fate on the global stage can often be explained only by understanding very internal and largely idiosyncratic developments. Part of the cunning of class lurks in the fact that although class forces such as *chamstwo* directly stem from the way global capitalism works, they cannot be understood from the global vantage point. Likewise, the very origins of the “Polish crisis,” the very first crisis of a socialist state in world history, and the pilot episode in the gradual agony of the Soviet block, are to be found, in my view, in the internal class tensions of the 1970s. These in turn can only be understood by scrutinizing the struggles over collective consumption in post-war cities, and the dialectic between Poland’s two conflicted spatial legacies. And these can be understood only by analyzing how the cunning of class enveloped post-war urbanization in class structures dating back to the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries – the two preceding moments of material expansion.

This is why after describing in Part One the first two episodes of the cunning of class in Poland, in Part Two and especially in Part Three I zoom in to the period I refer to as “the long 1960s,” starting (in Poland) in 1956 and ending in 1976 (the first signs of the coming crisis) or in 1980 (the outbreak of the *Solidarność* movement). As many authors have argued, the long 1960s were crucial also in the West – this period, and especially the years between 1968 and 1973, are often seen as the founding moments of global neoliberalism. Also in the Soviet Union, the 1960s was a period of intense tensions and economic debates because unlike in the 1930s and soon after World War Two, by the mid 1960s “growth figures could no longer back the claim of the superiority of the Soviet socialism.”¹⁶ Thus, the salience of the long 1960s for understanding the current world is not only a Polish but a more general phenomenon, although my focus will be mainly on Poland.

Because my research constraints allowed me to do a first-hand study only of a relatively short fraction of Łódź’s history (1958-1991), I had to rely heavily on the work of others. For that very reason, this study is also a summary and presentation of research done and published in Polish that Western readers normally have no access to. These studies also helped me to counterbalance the qualitative information that I found in *Odgłosy* with “harder” data. As the reader can see in the plates attached to this study, these two

¹⁶ Moshe Lewin, *Stalinism and the Seeds of Soviet Reform: The Debates Of the 1960s* (London: Pluto Press, 1991), 131.

“voices” speak in unison, only in a different register. My reliance on largely Polish-language materials for the pre-1956 history of Łódź meant, of course, that the picture may at times be somehow tilted towards the “Polish perspective.” I have remained aware of that danger, and sought to counterbalance the Polish material with what was available in English. After all Łódź used to be, after New York, Warsaw and Budapest, the fourth largest Jewish city in the world. My accounts on the Jewish Łódź are largely derived from a novel written in Yiddish by Israel Joshua Singer (brother of the Nobel Prize winner) in the late 1930s. It is very rich in “ethnographic” detail that in most points was in unison with the Polish history of Łódź. In a number of cases, however, there were differences. The most important one was, perhaps, the assessment of the 1905 revolution in Łódź. The Polish historiography maintains that the revolution was most dramatic in the “red” industrial district of Widzew (largely Polish), while many non-Polish sources suggest that the largely Jewish district of Bałuty was most “revolutionary” in that period. Whenever possible, I sought to balance such voices but I am aware that in some cases I might have been unable to do so.

Finally, the reader may be somehow surprised to encounter a number of names they have never heard of. Except for relying on the work of English-language scholars, such as Giovanni Arrighi, David Harvey, Neil Smith or Richard Sennett, the reader will find out about the work of Józef Burszta, Jerzy Topolski, Aleksander Wallis, or Kazimierz Wyka. These are scholars whose contribution was much more general and ambitious than only describing a fraction of Polish reality or history but whose work has never, or nearly never, been available in English. This study therefore presents a body of research that Western scholars never had direct access to. Paradoxically, the opening of the borders after 1989 as well as the increased volume of scientific research and publications that followed it did not facilitate a more democratic intellectual exchange between scholars working in the “metropolitan” and “parochial” places of the world system. As I argued elsewhere, there seems to be less and less meaningful discussion between Western (largely English-language) and Polish intellectuals over the last two, or even four, decades.¹⁷ The main reasons for that are, again, structural. My hope is that this study can serve as a “bridge” between the two epistemic worlds and hence somehow mitigate the prevailing current epistemic asymmetries.

¹⁷ Kacper Poblocki, “Whither Anthropology without Nation-state?: Interdisciplinarity, World Anthropologies and Commoditization of Knowledge,” *Critique of Anthropology* 29, no. 2 (June 1, 2009): 225-252.

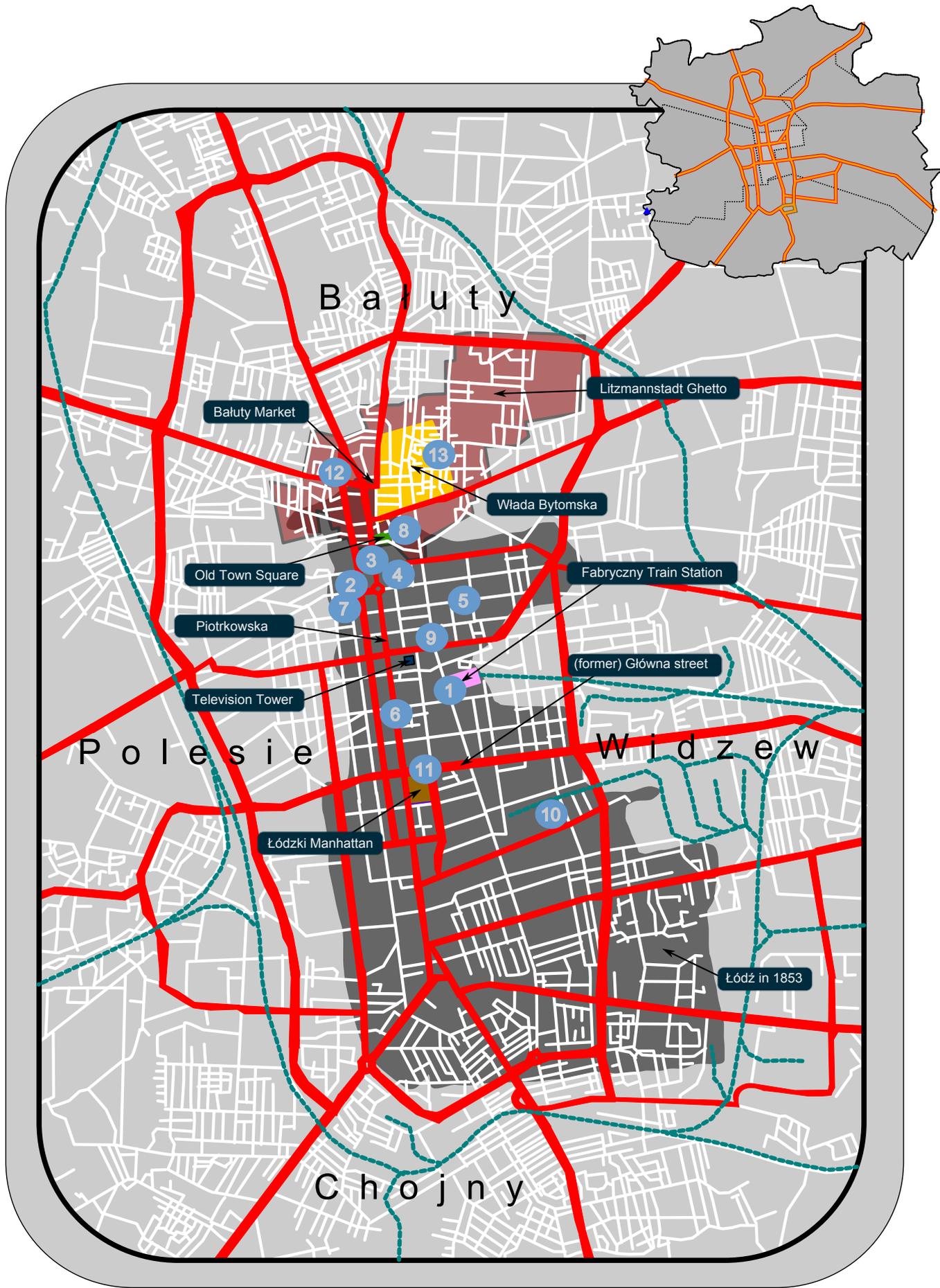


Plate One A map of Łódź and an approximate location of the photographs (the numbers)

PART ONE



Photograph Two – The old Poznański mill (red brick) turned into a shopping mall

UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT, CLASS AND THE CITY

Although neo-liberalism has been “dominant but dead”¹ for quite a while and it may just as well survive the current crisis further zombified, it might be nevertheless time to evaluate the intellectual landscape it has left. It has been argued that “the political economic tradition has from the outset developed one strand of Marx’s thought, the theory of the capitalist totality, at the expense of another, the theory of class.”² This asymmetry has been grossly exacerbated over the last few decades. Vast literature on the logic of late capitalism, post-Fordism, flexible accumulation and the like, was accompanied by a veritable “retreat from class.”³ Perhaps the most path-breaking recent theory of the capitalist totality, crafted in the late Giovanni Arrighi’s *The Long Twentieth Century* openly suffers that shortcoming too.⁴ In what commences below, however, I seek to provide a corollary to Arrighi’s contribution that might help mitigating the foregoing imbalance.

I do this in two steps. First, I argue that Arrighi’s model needs to be augmented to incorporate the narrative of the urbanization of capital. Space remains in his account

¹ Neil Smith, “Comment: Neo-liberalism: Dominant but dead,” *Focaal* 2008 (Summer 2008): 155-157.

² J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen Resnick, and Richard D. Wolff, “Toward a Poststructuralist Political Economy,” in *Re/Presenting Class: Essays in Postmodern Marxism*, ed. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen Resnick, and Richard D. Wolff (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 1, emphasis original.

³ Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Retreat from Class: A New “true” Socialism*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1998).

⁴ Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London: Verso, 1994), xii.

merely a “container” wherein social action unfolds. Until the Industrial Revolution, space indeed remained external to capitalist expansion, but with the advent of industrial cities, it was internalized. Further, if under the British space was consumed in the process of production, from the 1850s space became a “means of production” of its own. The American domination unfolded therefore not merely, as Arrighi claimed, under the aegis of the multinational corporation, but also under internalized urbanization and production of space. The long twentieth century, therefore, was as Neil Smith postulated a “century of geography.”

Second, I argue that the retreat from class was motivated precisely by our incapability to account for the fact that class is no longer (re)produced only in the workplace, and that class antagonisms have partially moved beyond the hidden abode of production. The extraordinary career of the highly maladroit “dual city” notion—the more it was criticized the more widespread its use was becoming—points to the urgent need for a theory of class that incorporates the internalization of urbanization by capitalism. I argue that the cornerstone of Marx’s “unfinished project” of class theory (his chapter of *Capital* on class was never completed) is directly indebted to Engels. Therefore, by revisiting a classic text, Engels’ *Condition of the Working Class in England*, and also Victorian Manchester, I wish to demonstrate that the notions of class, the city and uneven development have been intimately linked from the very beginning. Engels’ account of Manchester suggested a view that the capitalist city is splintered into areas occupied by two antagonistic camps, the bourgeoisie and proletariat, later summarized by the “dual class” or “dual city” notions. I argue that both are an oversimplified interpretation of what I call the “cunning of class.” By this, I mean a manner in which an abstraction (class) makes its way through history and the social world without becoming the direct target of social contention. The recent “retreat from class” was therefore a retreat from politics that challenge the very foundation of capitalism. I therefore take a step back to Engels and his Manchester, only to envision another step forward.

Nonsynchronous lineages of capitalism

Specters of the Atlantic

In a truly seductive *tour de force* of historical interpretation, Ian Baucom suggested recently that at the deepest recesses of “our long contemporaneity” lays a relatively minor event that occurred on the Atlantic Ocean in 1781. After careful consideration, the captain of a ship named *Zong* ordered thrown overboard a hundred thirty two slaves he was to deliver to Jamaica. The *Zong* massacre, in all its gruesomeness, was an economically rational act. The “cargo” was sick. If the slaves died onshore they would yield no profit. If, however, they died at sea, insurance would compensate owners with thirty pounds a head. This incident, according to Baucom, belongs as much to the past as it does to the present; it is, as he put it, part and parcel of “our long contemporaneity.” The rationality revealed by the *Zong*

massacre heralded the “financial revolution” of the late eighteenth century; it returned “through a variegated series of oscillations” during the final phase of our “long twentieth century” – namely the neoliberal financialization.⁵

Baucom weaved his narrative into Arrighi’s theory of historical capitalism. Each of the four consecutive “cycles of accumulation,” argued Arrighi, the Genoese/Spanish (1450-1650), Dutch (1560-1780), British (1750-1925), and American (1860-2008) shared a common morphology and, ultimately, fate. Each was opened and closed by a period of “financial expansion,” that bracketed a protracted phase of “material expansion.” The latter was driven by trade and/or production of commodities, whereas moments of financialization were marked by a withdrawal from “tangible” economic activities into the realms of finance, speculation, banking, real estate and conspicuous consumption. Financial expansion was hence a mark of a cycle’s “autumn” – being both its *belle époque* and the harbinger of a new order. Capital flight from the outgoing hegemon to the ascending one made the closing phase of financialization of the former coterminous with the opening of the latter. The “autumn” of the withering regime was the “spring” of the forthcoming one. The melting-into-air of “real” economies facilitated, hence, profound geographical relocations of the world economy’s epicenter.

Moreover, every financialization, including our own, is a deferred repetition of a scenario rehearsed first in medieval Florence. This is where and when, according to Arrighi, *haute finance* had been “invented.” Initially, it was servicing the Florentine cloth industry, but at one point competitive pressures “provoked a major relocation of capital from the purchase, processing, and sale of commodities to more flexible forms of investment, that is, primarily to the financing of domestic and foreign public debt.”⁶ Between 1338 and 1378 Florence heavily deindustrialized. As its economy had been based upon a “modern” wage labor relation—one-third of its population, around thirty thousand people, lived off wages paid by the cloth industry— this culminated in the cloth workers’ revolt of 1378, yet did not halt financialization. The Florentine elite turned into a “rentier class,” sponsoring arts, construction, and conspicuous consumption. Former cloth workers became the main labor force behind the “informal” Renaissance building boom.⁷ “Such seemingly ‘unproductive’ expenditure,” argued Arrighi, “was in fact good business policy.”⁸ This is how Florence became the home of the High Renaissance. “These are the fruits for which we remember them; but autumn is the season when fruit comes.”⁹

Although the origins of capitalism are typically associated with the British Industrial Revolution, the real historical breakthrough, argued Arrighi, came with the Florentine divorce, rather than marriage, of capitalism and industry.¹⁰ This was

⁵ Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 26-28.

⁶ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 100-1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁹ Hicks quoted in: *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 180.

the very first time when capital seemed to have been liberated from the necessity to meddle into the material world in order to reproduce itself. The *Zong* massacre occurred precisely when capital went footloose again. Just as Renaissance Florence before, and Edwardian Britain and Reaganite America later, the United Provinces in their “autumn” years underwent sharp deindustrialization. In the 1770s cloth production in Leyden was under a third of what it had been a century before. Likewise, shipbuilding had contracted: instead of several hundreds, there were merely thirty ships in the docks at Zaandam. The Dutch turned from a “nation of traders” into a “nation of rentiers.”¹¹ This ushered in, or rather brought back, an excessive rationality concerned merely with the short-term. The order of the day was: “it will last my time and after me the deluge!” as one Dutch pundit wrote in 1778.¹² Like all the others, such a decadent moment of financialization was a step backward. But it was a step forward as well. The British dislodged the Dutch from the commanding heights of the world economy not only by sapping their capital, but also by introducing new financial instruments tightly embedded in a novel geographical formation.

In his insistence that marine insurance, the slave trade, and the circum-Atlantic geography of exchange rose in a close association, Baucom radically sharpened the edge of Arrighi’s model. Financialization, he argued, unfolds not merely through the emergence of an abstract capital space-of-flows but it generates a new tangible geography to boot. A number of distant entrepôts scattered around the fringe of a vast ocean suddenly became parts of a new whole. Unlike the Mediterranean space-of-flows, described by Braudel, and based mainly upon trade in commodities, the Atlantic space-of-flows was dominated by financialization, argued Baucom. Insurance “transform[ed] the irregularity and unpredictability of a single slave voyage into a ‘regular, successive’ and even network of capital circulation.” Slaves were involved not as commodities, but rather “flexible, negotiable, transactable form of [interest-bearing] money.” Having sold the slaves, local factors in the Caribbean or Americas remitted the profit back to Liverpool in the form of an interest-bearing bill of exchange. “This bill amounted to a promise, or ‘guarantee’, to pay the full amount, with the agreed-upon interest, at the end of a specified period.” He therefore “not so much sold the slaves on the behalf of the Liverpool ‘owners’ as borrowed an amount equivalent to the sales proceeds from the Liverpool merchants and agreed to repay the amount with interest.” As a result, “what looked like a simple trade in commodities” was actually “a trade in loans.” The slave bodies hence were not only commoditized but above all financialized, serving as “a reserve deposits of a loosely organized, decentered, but vast trans-Atlantic banking system.” If not for this system, there would have been no incentive for *Zong*’s captain to throw slaves overboard. By doing so, he was “not destroying his employers’ commodities but hastening their transformation into money.”¹³

¹¹ G. R. R. Treasure, *The Making of Modern Europe, 1648-1780* (London: Routledge, 1985), 412-413.

¹² Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 173-174.

¹³ Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic*, 60-62.

The *Zong* massacre represents for Baucom the founding murder of our “reiterative twentieth century.”¹⁴ This is why, he insists, this event is so haunting: since we inhabit an age of financialization it is easy for us to recognize a part of ourselves in the drowned, financialized, slaves. The *Zong* massacre can function as a contemporary event because Baucom’s philosophy of history rests upon a sharp distinction between phases of material and financial expansion. Following Walter Benjamin’s remark that the nineteenth century was a repetition of the seventeenth, Baucom argued that the twentieth century was a repetition of the eighteenth. The nineteenth (and seventeenth) centuries represented the middle phase of the British (and Dutch) hegemonies, and hence were both “commodity-centered,” whereas the twentieth (and eighteenth) centuries, Baucom insisted, were dominated by financial expansions, and hence “speculative.”¹⁵ It is a common practice to overemphasize the cyclical character of Arrighi’s scheme. Also Hardt and Negri, among others, argued that Arrighi’s model of capitalist totality is one where “everything returns.”¹⁶ Arrighi took pains in showing how each cycle fully incorporates the anterior ones while modifying them at the same time. Moreover, British world supremacy, he stressed, rested on her being simultaneously “the workshop of the world” and “the entrepôt of the world.” If Liverpool represented for Baucom one of the capitals of the long twentieth century, the very same could be said of Manchester. Production and exchange, symbolized by Manchester and Liverpool respectively, were “the obverse and mutually reinforcing sides of the same process.”¹⁷ At least from 1772, when both cities were linked by a canal, they constituted one economic organism; ships dispatched from Liverpool were carrying Manchester textiles to be exchanged for African slaves. To appreciate this, however, one needs to venture into the backyard of the “trans-Atlantic factory of debt.”

Second, as Craig Muldrew brilliantly showed, the origins of financialization are not to be sought in the slave trade, but are much deeper, and reach to the networks of interpersonal credit that spanned English textile-producing households after the 1540s. It also planted the seeds of what Baucom described as “speculative culture,” whereby credit “referred to the amount of trust in society, and as such consisted of a system of judgments about trustworthiness; and the trustworthiness of neighbors came to be stressed as the paramount communal value.”¹⁸ This sixteenth century paved the way for paper money, central banks and slave trade insurance.¹⁹ Hence, not only the “speculative” eighteenth century grew out of the seventeenth, but it also prepared the ground for the nineteenth. *Specters of the Atlantic* can be seen as a corollary to Karl Polanyi’s account of the emergence of “fictitious commodities,”

¹⁴ Ibid., 151.

¹⁵ Ibid., 7-8, 18-21.

¹⁶ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000), 238-239.

¹⁷ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 213.

¹⁸ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin’s press, 1998), 148.

¹⁹ See also: Deborah M Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chap. 8, John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

namely money, land and labor.²⁰ Baucom provided a suggestive reinterpretation of how money turned from a measure of value of “real” goods into a commodity itself, but missed the crucial link between the three forms of fictitious commodities scrutinized so well by Polanyi. As a result of this, Baucom overlooked the overarching historical continuities that were the cornerstone of Polanyi’s genealogy of the present. The “nineteenth century consciousness,” Polanyi insisted, born “somewhere around 1780,” continues to be part and parcel of our “long contemporaneity.”²¹

All this said, Baucom’s philosophy of history remains highly compelling in the way it combines Arrighi’s model of capitalism with Ernst Bloch’s theory of nonsynchronism and embeds both in a geographical formation. In a critical rejoinder to György Lukács’ theory of all-embracing capitalist totality (essentially reduced to the logic of capital), Bloch suggested that the capitalist totality is multi-temporal and multi-spatial.²² “Not all people exist in the same Now,” Bloch insisted, for many social actors “carry earlier things with them, things which are intricately involved. One has one’s times according to where one stands corporeally, above all in terms of classes.” The present carries many elements of the past not through past events (such as the *Zong* massacre) but through the social classes involved in the accumulation process. In other words, when we analyze the capitalist totality from the point of agency and not structure (I will return to this debate in Chapter Five), then it turns out that “the workers are no longer alone with themselves and the bosses. Many earlier forces, from quite a different Below, are beginning to slip between.”²³ Class conflict, in other words, cannot be reduced to the logic of capital. Although the historical precedent for Bloch’s theory was the “pernicious” fusion of German capitalism and the Junker class, as I will discuss below, it also applies to the cradle of industrial capitalism, namely Britain. As the Brenner Debate demonstrated, the social origins of British industrial capitalism are agrarian.²⁴ Just as theorists such as Lukács would see such nonsynchronism as residual, from the point of view of class it is integral, if not fundamental, to the functioning of the capitalist totality and moreover it represents a fundamental limit to capital’s expansion.²⁵

In the German case, Bloch argued, the nonsynchronism harked back to the age of Reformation and the failed German Peasants’ Wars of the 1520s. The political

²⁰ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, Beacon paperbacks 45 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), chap. 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

²² Identical point was raised in Eric R Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), and for an review of such an approach to the capitalist totality: Don Kalb and Herman Tak, “Introduction: Critical Junctions-Recapturing Anthropology and History,” in *Critical Junctions: Anthropology and History Beyond the Cultural Turn* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 1-27.

²³ Ernst Bloch, “Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics,” trans. Mark Ritter, *New German Critique*, no. 11 (Spring 1977): 22.

²⁴ *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe*, Past and present publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

²⁵ David C. Durst, “Ernst Bloch’s Theory of Nonsimultaneity,” in *Weimar Modernism: Philosophy, Politics, and Culture in Germany, 1918-1933* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2004), 17.

constellation that coalesced back then gave a blow to the “free-spirited medieval city culture” and successfully postponed until 1918 the breaking out of a bourgeoisie revolution in Germany.²⁶ Of course the German “belatedness” is not unrelated to the British “advancement.” Areas that fall outside the constantly shifting geographical “core” of the world economy are an integral part of the capitalist totality; it is precisely the incorporation the many “peripheries” that makes it multi-spatial and multi-temporal. In Chapters Two and Three I will return to this in greater detail and I will analyze the the agrarian and class roots of contemporary capitalism (as well as to the Brenner Debate), as well as describe how the “refeudalization” of early-modern Poland-Lithuania was part and parcel of the Dutch hegemony. The class structures that were formed back then have ever since served as the linchpin for both the nineteenth century industrialization and twentieth century urbanization of Poland. In Chapter Four I will argue that even the massive working-class upsurge of June 1905 was unable to challenge the prevailing class structures and the revolution that effectively buried the *ancien régime* in Poland occurred only during World War Two. Before I do that, it is nevertheless crucial to explicate in this chapter why the Industrial Revolution remains a crucial element of our nonsynchronous “long contemporaneity.”

The work that demonstrated in the most probing fashion that our current predicaments are directly inherited from the age of industrial cities is Richard Sennett’s *The Fall of Public Man*. He brilliantly demonstrated that although industrial cities (or, in fact, capitals of industrializing nations, as his book dealt exclusively with Paris and London) have long ceased being at the world’s cutting edge, the experience of industrial capitalism “laid the groundwork for our present-day problems.” The eclipse of class and the bracketing of the nineteenth century (as evident in Baucom’s work, for example) go hand in hand. One the one hand, class had become “psychologized.” Nowadays class “seems to be a product of personal drive and ability rather than of a systematic social determination.”²⁷ Hence, it turned from an abstract to a personal notion. On the other hand, there is an elective affinity between this and a wholesale withdrawal from public life and a turn towards the “private refuge” in the suburban bosom of the family. Early responses to the tremors of industrial capitalism turned impersonality—still a virtue in the eighteenth century—into a moral evil. Public space ceased being a legitimate ground where one could interact with strangers yet remain aloof from them. Urban and public medium was refashioned into a field for the disclosure of personality and an important realm for personal, and not public, experience. The “unsettled past” of the Industrial Revolution, to borrow Bloch’s terms, translates directly into an “impeded future,” especially for the still heavily privatized urban public culture. This is why in this chapter I wish to revisit industrial cities, and in particular Victorian Manchester, that Sennett surprisingly paid no attention to, and analyze how amongst the vast array of critics of the new urban life there was a single voice that embraced

²⁶ David C Durst, “Ernst Bloch’s Theory of Nonsimultaneity,” in *Weimar Modernism: Philosophy, Politics, and Culture in Germany, 1918-1933* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2004), 8-9.

²⁷ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 219.

the novel forms of estrangement and envisioned new forms of sociability that transcended the lure of intimacy that most commentators succumbed to.

Manchester - the shock city

“Phantoms and specters! The age of ruins is past. Have you seen Manchester?” exclaimed a character in a Disraeli novel, written just after its author had seen the city.²⁸ Just as nineteenth century London and Paris described by Sennett, Victorian Manchester stirred up highly ambiguous emotions. For Caryle it was uncanny, “more sublime than Niagra, ... every whit as wonderful, as fearful, as unimaginable, as the oldest Salems [Jerusalem] or prophetic city.”²⁹ There lurked some “precious substance, beautiful as magic dreams, and yet no dream but reality...hidden in that noisome wrappage.”³⁰ For many others, however, Manchester manifested itself as “entrance to hell realized.”³¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, for example, described Manchester thus: “from this filthy sewer pure gold flows. Here humanity attains its most complete development and its most brutish; here civilization works its miracles, and civilized man is turned back almost into a savage.”³² Awe at this “the very symbol of civilization” and this “grand incarnation of progress” was nearly always superimposed by anxieties imparted from the forbidding urban landscape.³³

Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees suggested that “it is easy to caricature industrial towns,” and both superlatives and indictments they received were grossly exaggerated. Rising, it seemed, nearly overnight and on a “clean slate,” towns like Manchester were atypical of the Industrial Revolution. “Much more common in the European setting,” they stressed, “was the vast array of older cities [such as London and Paris] linked by their central place functions into which industry moved slowly.”³⁴ Yet, this was *precisely* why Manchester was so alarming: elsewhere, we can read in yet another exposé, “industry has been grafted upon pre-existing state of society,” whereas in Manchester “industry has found no previous occupant, and knows nothing but itself. Everything is alike, and everything is new; there is nothing but masters and operatives.”³⁵ Manchester, the “shock city” of the Industrial Revolution, jarred the Victorian eye and conscience because it was unprecedented and unique.³⁶ Here the paternal feudal ethos was obliterated: “the separation between the different classes ... is far more complete [in Manchester] than in any country ... there is far less *personal* communication between the master cotton

²⁸ quoted in: Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class* (New York: Norton, 1985), 37.

²⁹ quoted in: Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 93.

³⁰ quoted in: Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 35.

³¹ Sir William Napier quoted in: *Ibid.*, 46, on the “satanic Manchester” and Engels as the modern Dante, see also Andy Merrifield, *Metromarxism: A Marxist Tale of the City* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 32, 37.

³² quoted in: Peter Geoffrey Hall, *Cities in Civilization* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1998), 310.

³³ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 88. See also: Andrew Lees and Lynn Hollen Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 63.

³⁴ Paul M Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1950* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), 248. See also: Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 130

³⁵ Léonard Faucher quoted in: Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 59.

³⁶ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 133.

spinner and his workmen ... than there is between the Duke of Wellington and the humblest laborer on his estate.”³⁷

Because for centuries Manchester remained outside the British medieval urban system—it was neither a municipal borough, nor a town sending representatives to Parliament, but a manor—it could facilitate the development of the “newest, most free and most modern kind of industrial economy” that was not constrained by the medieval guild system.³⁸ Like Liverpool, Manchester was a key node of the Atlantic space-of-flows linked more intimately with distant territories than with the domestic economy. The latter was still dominated by “traditional” economic pursuits and “landed” rather than “mobile” property. “Well into the Edwardian twilight,” Arno Mayer argued, “there were fewer and smaller fortunes in manufacture and industry than in landowning, commerce, and private banking.”³⁹ Furthermore, “preindustrial economic interests, prebourgeois elites, predemocratic authority systems, premodernist artistic idioms, and ‘archaic’ mentalities” dominated Europe until the World War One.” In this sense, the perception of the nineteenth century as driven by dynamo of industrialization is indeed “partial and distorted.”⁴⁰ Britain’s nonsynchronism notwithstanding, Manchester did represent the “urban frontier of the future,”⁴¹ precisely because its excesses, the fact that here like nowhere else opulence and penury brushed shoulders, were portend of a novel principle of social order that mounted a challenge to the “old regime” and its yardstick of hierarchy. Manchester was the very first city dominated by *nouveaux riches* and *nouveaux pauvres*. Unlike the old aristocracy and the old poor, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat “had grown up together and were tied to each other” yet they “had no tradition of rank, no myth of legitimacy, no ‘prestige of decent’ ... endowed by the patina of centuries” to rely on.⁴² Unlike in Paris and London, classes in Manchester were people without history, and their “myth of origin” had to be established.

“Every age has its shock city,” argued Asa Briggs. At the eve of the American hegemony, responses similar to those imparted by Manchester were conjured up by Chicago.⁴³ While the Chicagoan narratives of horror and fascination have been generally acknowledged as the cornerstone of urban anthropology,⁴⁴ the accomplishments of the “small army of intrepid explorers”⁴⁵ who swarmed to Victorian shock cities have not been included in that canon. The sole exception is the *Condition of the Working Class in England*, written by Friedrich Engels in 1844,

³⁷ Canon Parkinson quoted in: Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 114 emphasis original; see also: Ira Katznelson, *Marxism and the City* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 148.

³⁸ Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 6-7.

³⁹ Arno J Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 93.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁴¹ Harold L Platt, *Shock Cities: The Environmental Transformation and Reform of Manchester and Chicago* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 15.

⁴² Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1959), 6.

⁴³ Platt, *Shock Cities*, chap. 4.

⁴⁴ Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the City: Inquiries Toward an Urban Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), chap. 2.

⁴⁵ Platt, *Shock Cities*, 15.

that has been sometimes dubbed “ethnographic,”⁴⁶ but nonetheless paid relatively little heed to. Unlike what was later called the “Chicago school,” those who described Victorian Manchester were not professional scholars. Most notably, Engels was a “veritable autodidact of the old school,”⁴⁷ well acquainted with German philosophy, but never employed at university. He came to Manchester to work for his father’s textile firm. When he ventured into the Mancunian “noisome labyrinth,” he did so in his spare time. For that reason the fruits of his labors have been generally described by a term less dignified than “anthropology,” i.e. slumming. It did, nevertheless, facilitate a profound “beginning of and a break in and simultaneous transformation of the German cultural tradition,”⁴⁸ that might continue to be as indispensable for urban anthropology as the heritage of the Chicago school.

“Invented” by the Roman Emperor Nero, slumming, argued Peter Hitchcock, emerges “when a class in dominance seeks to understand the logic of its excessive existence and identity by foraging among its minions.” This is how in Victorian Britain, slumming ceased to denote passing bad money or bad faith and started meaning “an excursion into the nether worlds of the poor and destitute” often in the form of “slumming parties ... put together as a form of entertainment or pastime ‘out of curiosity.’” Just as in Ancient Rome slumming was merely a “facet of a decadent geist,” in industrial Britain it “became the ward chiefly of a newly extravagant bourgeoisie, cognizant not only of its dubious heritage” but also curious of proletariat that “gave to its constituency both integrity and fear.”⁴⁹

In Victorian Manchester, the emphasis was initially on “fear.” What was uncanny about Manchester was that the new principle of social differentiation that produced the *nouveaux riches* and *nouveaux pauvres* was impersonal. Men who visited Manchester, Steven Marcus argued, “were abruptly discovering that human existence ... had evolved in such a way that masses of human beings were now being constrained to conduct lives under conditions of unimaginable extremity.” These early accounts ushered in the “the distinctively modern experience of the extreme,” and Victorian urbanization represented “one of these junctures at which a part of all of us today was first created.”⁵⁰ Even Friedrich Engels, who grew up amidst an industrial landscape and should have been unimpressed by Manchester, was initially paralyzed by what he had seen. It was literally, he admitted, “impossible to convey an idea” of the urban horror. “On re-reading my description” of Manchester, he confessed, “I am forced to admit that instead of being

⁴⁶ For example by Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 149.

⁴⁷ Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, 32.

⁴⁸ Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 92-93.

⁴⁹ Peter Hitchcock, “Slumming,” in *Passing: Identity and Interpretation in Sexuality, Race, and Religion*, ed. María Carla Sánchez and Linda Schlossberg, Sexual cultures (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 161-166.

⁵⁰ Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 45.

exaggerated, it is far from black enough to convey a true impression of the filth, ruin, and uninhabitableness.”⁵¹

Part of the Manchester’s uncanniness stemmed therefore from the unheard-of extremity of the working-class squalor. Another came from slummers’ reaction to it. They quickly evicted the working-class from their narratives of industrial capitalism, and subjected to “hifalutin literaryness” and “compulsive and factitious mythologizing.”⁵² De Tocqueville’s critique of the “business aristocracy” “found a safe way to relieve his anxiety” that “a society of affluence and leisure but seemed to be destroying the very thing it was ultimately seeking to enhance, the quality of daily life.” His solution to the paradox of progress lay in his conclusion that Manchester was “the result not of laws of economic and technological progress, but of an unbridled form of individualism.” “Everything,” he wrote, “in the exterior appearance of the city attests to the individual powers of man.”⁵³ Likewise, concluded Carlyle, “soot and despair are not the essence” of Manchester.⁵⁴ Instead, penury was presented “in terms of ‘accidental’ rather than necessary causes ... [deflecting] the theme of exploitation into issues of urban sanitation and sexual excesses without reference to causal factors.”⁵⁵ “I am persuaded,” a typical account of that sort read, “that Manchester must long continue to present an appearance of great destitution and delinquency which does not belong to the town itself, but arises from a class of immigrants and passengers.” As a result, “the immense misery becomes merely an ‘appearance,’ not a reality; and even as appearance it does not ‘belong’” to Manchester nor does it belong to the poor but “it ‘arises from’ them detachably, like some kind of visible effluvium.”⁵⁶

“It cannot come as a surprise,” argued Marcus, “that such mental escapes and avoidances were a regular resort, and were taken by men of good will as well.”⁵⁷ Especially that it was not only the sight of poverty but the entire urban experience that was arresting, if not shocking. “Throwing together of millions of people in the city,” wrote Engels, produced “that ‘strange’ effect whereby ‘a man cannot collect himself.’” The city, as it was later more comprehensively elucidated by Benjamin and Simmel, was “no longer experienced in a unified way” but instead “reduced to a seemingly random series of half-impressions, images and thoughts only partially registered.”⁵⁸ Putting the obverse side of the “sublime Manchester” to the forefront, Engels gradually overcome the shock, and paragraph by paragraph restored poverty-as-appearance back to the “essence” the city. Unlike others, he actually made the

⁵¹ Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England: From Personal Observations and Authentic Sources* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 87, 92. Also Dickens wrote on his first visit to Manchester thus: “I have seen enough for my purpose, and what I have seen has disguised and astonished me beyond all measure”, quoted in Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 30

⁵² Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 44-45.

⁵³ Platt, *Shock Cities*, 7, 11.

⁵⁴ Carlyle quoted in: Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 35.

⁵⁵ Aruna Krishnamurthy, “‘More than abstract knowledge’: Friedrich Engels in Industrial Manchester,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28, no. 02 (2000): 430.

⁵⁶ Cooke Taylor quoted in: Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 52.

⁵⁷ Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 52.

⁵⁸ Krishnamurthy, “‘More than abstract knowledge’: Friedrich Engels in Industrial Manchester,” 438.

reader see the urban squalor. But this is more than just a parade of horrors. Bringing the poor back in is an element in Engels' searching for the agency responsible for the propinquity of wealth and penury. "The cause of the miserable condition of the working-class is to be sought," he wrote later "not in these minor grievances, but *in the capitalistic system itself*."⁵⁹ Just as the old wealth and poverty could be explained by a system based upon *personal* domination, here "the relationship of the manufacturer to his operative has nothing human in it; it is purely economic."⁶⁰ The new principle of estrangement was hence wholly abstract, and *external* to both parties involved.

Engels' discovery of class

As Marcus insisted, the process of writing became Engels' strategy whereby he "collected himself" from the shock foisted upon both amateurs and professionals of urban anthropology. Engels' book "begins without an organizing conception, and large parts of it consist of Engels' casting about for a notion that will intelligibly subordinate the material that keeps continually slipping away."⁶¹ Only in the very last chapter did he find the "general structure ... a coherent totality, a concrete, complex and systematic whole" of his personal experience of Manchester,⁶² something David Harvey once called "structured coherence" of a place.⁶³ It was class, as "before the privilege of property all other privileges vanish."⁶⁴ It has been pointed out that Engels did not craft a well-rounded class theory, but rather provided "raw components of a new theoretical structure" for Marx. Yet, Marx's theory of class remained as unprocessed as that of Engels'. This seems to be, however, intentional, for class in Engels' rendering was not a thing, but a process—both social and cognitive—and to retain its dynamic, it had to remain "unfinished."⁶⁵

Engels' ethnographic contribution is often reduced to the passage, where he declared: "we German theoreticians still knew much too little of the real world to be driven by the real relations." This is why in order to develop "more than a mere *abstract* knowledge of my subject" Engels explained, "I forsook the company of dinner parties...and spend many a happy hour in obtaining the knowledge of the realities of life."⁶⁶ This often-quoted excerpt suggests that he repudiated the German idealist philosophy together with the bourgeois dinner parties. Not quite. Engels' innovation was more than just the fact that he ventured into the "Dantesque underworld" of working class Manchester and described what others preferred to

⁵⁹ writing in 1892, Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 27 emphasis original.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 313 For an insightful analysis of the historical roots of the separation of the economic and political realms in Europe see a review of Carl Schmitt's work in: Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000), chap. 1.

⁶¹ Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, 148.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶³ David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Oxford, [England]: B. Blackwell, 1989), 139-144.

⁶⁴ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 312.

⁶⁵ Gareth Stedman Jones, "Engels and the Genesis of Marxism," *New Left Review* 106, no. I (1977): 85.

⁶⁶ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 14, 9.

disavow.⁶⁷ He also wrote: “I know [Manchester] as intimately as my own native town, and *more intimately than most of its residents know it*,”⁶⁸ and hence suggested what Henri Lefebvre spelled out later: immediate experience of the city is insufficient for comprehending it in its totality; the city as a whole can be understood only in the abstract.⁶⁹

Engels arrived at this conclusion only by the end of his book. He opens it, on the contrary, with a presentation of what *can* be inferred from a first-hand experience of the city. “The dissolution of mankind into monads,” he writes, is “carried out to its utmost extreme” in large cities. “What is true of London, is true of Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, is true of all great towns. Everywhere barbarous indifference, hard egotism on one hand, and nameless misery on the other, everywhere social warfare, every man’s house in a stage of siege.” Urban crowds “have nothing in common ... their only agreement is the tacit one, that each keep to his side of the pavement,” they even do not “honour [one] another with so much as a glance.”⁷⁰ The more individuals are “crowded within a limited space,” the greater their private isolation becomes. Capitalism, by creating large agglomeration and facilitating “war of all against all,” splinters its subjects into isolated monads trapped in their private worlds.

To be sure, the urban anthropologist cannot help but succumb to this atomizing quality of city life. In order to overcome the unsettling “intensification of nervous stimulations,” as Simmel once put it,⁷¹ and understand the city in its totality, Engels had to develop more than mere *personal* knowledge of his subject. Paradoxically, it was his Manchester experience, and uniqueness of that place, that allowed him to move beyond the spatial and epistemic fragmentation. What singled out Manchester from all large British cities was that “the modern art of manufacture has reached its perfection” only in Manchester, and its “effects upon the working-class” developed “here most freely and perfectly, and the manufacturing proletariat present[s] itself in its fullest classic perfection.”⁷² Indeed, Manchester was the harbinger of novel land uses, marked by the increasing division between work and home, commerce and manufacturing, and, most importantly, between slum and suburb. The poor had no other choice but to live a walking distance from their work, whereas the “money aristocracy” could leapfrog the inner city squalor and pollution thanks to a system of omnibuses that brought them to their suburban villas equipped with numerous amenities, including “free, wholesome county air.”⁷³ The spatial separation of slum and suburb was nowhere in Britain as deep and perfect as in Manchester. Precisely for that reason, as Asa Briggs stressed: “[i]f Engels had lived not in Manchester but in Birmingham, his conception of ‘class’ and his theories of the role of class in history might have been very different. In this case Marx might have been not a

⁶⁷ Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, 37.

⁶⁸ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 81, emphasis mine.

⁶⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 59-68.

⁷⁰ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 64-65.

⁷¹ in: Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, 64.

⁷² Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 81.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 85.

communist but a currency reformer. The fact that Manchester was taken to be the symbol of the age... was of central political importance in modern world history.”⁷⁴

Although Engels’ notion of class might appear somehow “raw” in hindsight, in order to capture its extraordinary dynamism, I suggest introducing the distinction between “proletariat” and “working class” as proposed once by Étienne Balibar. The former denotes class as a political and revolutionary subject facilitating transcendence of capitalism, the latter refers to class as a product of capitalism and the necessary condition for its continuous reproduction.⁷⁵ Although Engels himself admitted “I have continually used the expressions working-men and proletarians, working-class, propetyless class and proletariat as equivalents,”⁷⁶ Balibar’s distinction underpins the very core of Engels’ dynamic usage of class. The unique spatial predicament of Mancunian workers propelled Engels, as Ira Katznelson pointed out, to confront “a striking paradox of the orderly way the social classes are arrayed in space in spite of the absence of planning.” Therefore Engels “pioneered in the analysis of the spatial structure of the city,”⁷⁷ by demonstrating how capitalism ushered in “the concentration of workers in autonomous working-class communities, where, free from direct supervision of their employers or the state, they could create such institutions as reading rooms, and working man’s clubs and societies.”⁷⁸ Although isolated from the bourgeoisie and “systematically [shout out] from the main thoroughfares,” the working class was far from being internally homogeneous. Instead, it was divided by age, ethnic, religion and gender, fractured in various professional sub-groups working in different departments of the economy (mining, textiles, agriculture etc.), and dwelling in various urban organisms (Manchester, Dublin, Glasgow etc.). This is why, as Eric Wolf once pointed out, we should speak of the “working classes” rather than one working class.⁷⁹ They are highly diversified, and actually compete with one another on the labor market.

Nonetheless, the working classes do constitute a single class but only as proletariat. Competition and unbearable conditions of work and life have stripped workers of everything but their humanity. Therefore, there is “no cause for surprise if the workers, treated as brutes, actually become such.” A worker is “a passive subject of all possible combinations of circumstances” and “his character and way of living are naturally shaped by these conditions.” Yet, workers “can maintain their consciousness of manhood only by cherishing the most glowing hatred, the most unbroken inward rebellion against the bourgeoisie in power.” The working class, therefore, can “rescue its manhood, and this he can do solely in rebellion.” As working-class, their lot is dramatically worse than that of a slave or a serf who are provided at least with means of subsistence. The industrial worker “has not the

⁷⁴ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 116.

⁷⁵ Etienne Balibar, “In Search of the Proletariat: the Notion of Class Politics in Marx,” in *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx* (London: Routledge, 1994), 125-149.

⁷⁶ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 15.

⁷⁷ Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 149.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁷⁹ Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, 276-7, 358, 385.

slightest guarantee for being able to earn the barest necessities of life.” From a political perspective, however, workers are ahead of the slave or serf. Because their servitude is concealed by patriarchal relations, the latter “must have remained an intellectual zero, totally ignorant of his own interest, a mere private individual. Only when estranged from his employer, when conceived that the sole bond between employer and employee is the bond of pecuniary profit” did “the worker begin to recognize his own interest and develop independently ... And to this end manufacture on a grand scale and in great cities has most largely contributed.”⁸⁰ Engels, thus, does not cherish the working-class community, or its culture. Rather, he hopes for their coming-of-age as a proletariat. Only as a proletariat can the working classes transcend the war of all against all, and mature into a class by becoming “the true intellectual leader of England.”⁸¹ Therefore, Engels’ usage of class was both descriptive and political.

To see in the wretched working classes a potential political subject, the proletariat, Engels had to transcend the fragmented city. Thus his book is *not* a monograph on Manchester. Its sections *not* devoted to Manchester, but to the description of the mining and agricultural proletariat, and long passages on industrial towns such as Glasgow or Dublin, were critical for this process of abstraction. This is why Mancunian workers were spectral in a double sense. First, as “brutes” deprived of all but humanity that he saw in Manchester and described at length. The proletariat as a revolutionary subject was spectral too, in the sense that it was contingent upon recognizing the emancipatory potential of the unity of their class. It is to this potential political subject that Engels dedicated his book. “One is tempted to say,” argued Hitchcock, “that Engels is addressing ghosts, for the working ‘men’ he invokes in the opening passage would have been long gone before the text reached them in a recognizable form.”⁸² The proletariat did not yet exist, but was politically conceivable. Unlike in Balibar’s argument, for Engels the possibility of subaltern wrath amalgamating into revolution hinged upon *interplay* of the two facets of class—the empirical (working classes) and the political (proletariat)—and not upon their separation. This is precisely why Engels does not differentiate the two in his text. They bear on each other because both were engendered by urban capitalism; the maturation of the working classes into a proletariat can be set off only in a city.

The cunning of class

Vicissitudes of dual cities

From de Tocqueville to Disraeli and Bentham, commentators writing on industrial cities noted that unheard-of poverty was somehow related to unheard-of plenty. The nascent sciences of both physics and economics lent a high-brow veneer to the view

⁸⁰ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 153-162.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 275.

⁸² Hitchcock, “Slumming,” 167.

that poverty was nature surviving in society.⁸³ This is how “compassion was removed from the hearts, and the stoic determination to renounce human solidarity in the name of the greatest happiness of the greatest number gained the dignity of secular religion.”⁸⁴ To be precise, compassion was not removed, but rather channeled differently. It now worked in favor of searching for human warmth and intimacy against the grain of dehumanizing and alienating urban world. “If people are not speaking to each other on the street,” Sennett noted, “how are they to know who they are as a group? ... Those silent, single people at cafes, those flâneurs of the boulevards who strutted past but spoke to no one, continued to think they were in a special milieu and that other people in it were sharing something with themselves. The tools they had to work with in constructing a picture of who they were as a collectivity, now that neither clothes nor speech were revealing, were the tools of fantasy, of projection.”⁸⁵ The key realization of such fantasy was community – whether it was a working class neighborhood or a middle class suburb.⁸⁶ Just as most commentators succumbed to that illusion, Engels recognized the political potential inherent in the impersonal nature of the new form of social inequality; hence he embraced the proletarian *class* rather than cherished the working-class *community*.

Since writers quoted by Sennett typically compared industrializing London or Paris to the public order of the *ancien régime* (dominated by ways of the royal court), the key notion they employed for describing the new urban order was “corruption.” For Rousseau as well as for Balzac “genuine feelings [in a large industrial metropolis] are broken by the play of interest ... Virtue is slandered and innocence is sold [and] a honest man is a fool.”⁸⁷ Because Engels recognized the novelty of Manchester and its social relations, he did not compare it to pre-industrial cities. Neither did he disavow penury, nor saw it as residual. By bringing the obverse of Manchester’s economic prosperity to the forefront, Engels sought to establish theoretical understanding of the industrial city. He demonstrated how extraordinary accumulation of wealth was *contingent* upon proliferation of poverty and hence gave us the linchpin for a relational theory of uneven development.⁸⁸ It is important to remember that both uneven development and class manifested themselves for Engels through the urban experience of industrial capitalism. In Manchester, Engels noted, “the working-class has gradually become a race wholly apart from that English bourgeoisie ... The workers speak other dialects, have other thoughts and ideals, other customs and moral principles, a different religion and other politics than those of the bourgeoisie. Thus they are two radically dissimilar nations, as

⁸³ see: Philip Mirowski, *More Heat Than Light: Economics as Social Physics, Physics as Nature's Economics*, Historical perspectives on modern economics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁸⁴ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 102.

⁸⁵ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 222.

⁸⁶ See also: August Carbonella, “Beyond the Limits of the Visible World: Remapping Historical Anthropology,” in *Critical Junctions: Anthropology and History Beyond the Cultural Turn*, ed. Don Kalb and Herman Tak (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 88-108.

⁸⁷ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 156.

⁸⁸ Charles Tilly, “Relational origins of inequality,” *Anthropological Theory* 1, no. 3 (September 1, 2001): 355-372.

unlike as difference of race could make them.”⁸⁹ It was in largest cities, he stressed, where “the opposition between the proletariat and bourgeoisie first made itself manifest.”⁹⁰ Not only do “class,” “uneven development” and “the city” share a common origin, but they are somehow coterminous. The terms of their coalescence, however, have stirred many controversies.

Consider, for example, the “dual city” controversy.⁹¹ Although it has been generally acknowledged that Engels’ “description of segmented city space and cross-class isolation might have been something of an exaggeration,”⁹² his study became the ur-text for the dual city concept. Just as cities in the age of absolutism and mercantilism were “marked by great individual character,” Industrial Revolution had a profound homogenizing effect on urban space. Sennett argued that it was Baron Haussmann (hired by Napoleon III to rebuild Paris after the 1848 revolution) who was the first to reduce social diversity of residential areas and turned neighborhoods into uniform economic zones. Thanks to his efforts, the population of Paris “became at once homogenized on a small turf and differentiated from a turf to turf.” Nowadays we are “so accustomed to think that the economy of an area ‘fits’ the level of affluence of its inhabitants” that we find it difficult to imagine the social diversity of pre-industrial neighborhoods. Yet, we can speak of the tendency towards spatial congruence of class and community only from the mid nineteenth century.⁹³ And it is that ideal that the “dual city” notion seeks to describe. Yet, Baron Haussmann merely turned something that evolved “more by omission than by commission” in Manchester (to borrow Engels’ phase) into a full-fledged urban policy. Only between 1835 and 1845, for example, “Manchester achieved a higher degree of suburbanization than London did in the whole century from 1770 to 1870.”⁹⁴ Certainly with Haussmann’s aid, the spatial “pattern which had been pioneered in Manchester was repeated, with variations, all over the world,” as Mark Girouard argued.⁹⁵ Therefore, as Manchester ceased being the one and only “chimney of the world,” and industrial urbanization wrecked havoc in other European states and their colonies, it seemed that social polarization engendering “two nations” and “two races” comes along in the “Manchester package.”

Thereby, a “small crack” in the urban tissue of early nineteenth century Cairo, argued Janet Abu-Lughod in a seminal text on the “dual city,” had “widened into a gaping fissure” by the end of it. Colonial and industrial Cairo was divided into a “pre-industrial native city” and a “colonial city with its steam-powered techniques,

⁸⁹ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 162.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁹¹ For an useful summary see: Chris Hamnett, “Social Segregation and Social Polarization,” in *Handbook of Urban Studies*, ed. Ronan Paddison (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 162-176

⁹² Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 149-150; see also David Ward, “Victorian cities: How modern?,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 1, no. 2 (April 1975): 150-151 and David Ward, “Environ and neighbours in the “Two Nations” residential differentiation in mid-nineteenth-century Leeds,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 6, no. 2 (April 1980): 133-162.

⁹³ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 135.

⁹⁴ quoted in: Platt, *Shock Cities*, 17.

⁹⁵ Mark Girouard, *Cities & People: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 269.

its faster pace and wheeled traffic, and its European identifies.” Cairo was but an example: “the major metropolis in almost every newly-industrialized country,” she stressed in 1965, “is not a single unified city, but, in fact, two quite different cities, physically juxtaposed but architecturally and socially distinct.”⁹⁶ Abu-Lughod’s assertion was quickly challenged. It was pointed out that non-European capitalist cities were not dual, but at least triple, with distinct zones occupied by whites, natives and immigrants, and slums smeared across all three zones.⁹⁷

It has become a rule of thumb in the dual city debate that those who employed the concept also lamented its poor explanatory capacity. Trying to verify if the “dual city” was still applicable in the late 1980s, Manuel Castells and John Mollenkopf argued that “the complexity of New York’s social structure cannot be reduced to a dichotomy between the two extremes of the scale of income distribution.”⁹⁸ Instead, they singled out six major occupational groups within the economy of the New York City.⁹⁹ As a result, they replaced the binary class dichotomy with the core-periphery metaphor: “cultural, economic, and political polarization in New York takes the form of a contrast between a comparatively cohesive core of professionals and a disorganized periphery fragmented by race, ethnicity, gender, occupational and industrial location and the spaces they occupy.”¹⁰⁰ There was a caveat too: a large group, according to Castells and Mollenkopf, did not fit their model at all. This is precisely what Susan Fainstein and Michael Harloe highlighted in their *Divided Cities*.¹⁰¹ Likewise, reviewers of *Divided Cities* emphasized that “the complexity of [urban] processes cast doubt on any simple summary (such as the notion of a ‘dual city’).”¹⁰² Even Peter Marcuse’s effort to square the sophistication of this metaphor by proposing a notion of a “quartered city”¹⁰³ had been criticized for “insufficiently [reflecting] the complex political, social, and cultural divisions related to the new model of urbanization.”¹⁰⁴

Criticism notwithstanding, the “dual city” metaphor returned with a vengeance whenever polarizations within and without capitalist cities were being addressed. For example, writing on racial divisions in contemporary American cities, Alice

⁹⁶ Janet Abu-Lughod, “Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7, no. 4 (July 1965): 429-430.

⁹⁷ Judit Bodnar, “Metaphors We Live In: Dual Cities, Uneven Development and the Splitting of Unitary Frames,” *MS*: 5-6.

⁹⁸ Quoted in: Susan S Fainstein and Michael Harloe, “Conclusion: the divided cities,” in *Divided Cities: New York & London in the Contemporary World*, ed. Susan S Fainstein, Ian Gordon, and Michael Harloe, Studies in urban and social change (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), 254.

⁹⁹ upper level executives, managers, professionals, clerical workers, the public sector, and finally those outside of the labor market.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in: Susan S Fainstein and Michael Harloe, “Conclusion: the divided cities,” 254.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹⁰² Chris Tilly and Marie Kennedy, “Review: Cities: Beyond the Fragments,” *Contemporary Sociology* 22, no. 6 (November 1993): 839-840.

¹⁰³ Peter Marcuse, “Dual city’: a muddy metaphor for a quartered city,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, no. 17 (1989): 384-403.

¹⁰⁴ Handsruedi Hitz, Christian Schmid, and Richard Wolff, “Zürich Goes Global: Economic Restructuring, Social Conflicts and Polarization,” in *Social Polarization in Post-industrial Metropolises*, ed. John Vianney O’Loughlin, Jürgen Friedrichs, and John Vianney O’Loughlin, Jürgen Friedrichs (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 130-131.

O'Connor argued that "in major cities nationwide, overall economic growth is accompanied by higher than average rates of unemployment and poverty, concentrated especially in low-income, working class minority neighborhoods."¹⁰⁵ Also Alexander Reichl embraced the core-periphery metaphor, arguing that there is a clear contrast between "spectacular gains" in core neighborhoods and stagnation of those outside it.¹⁰⁶ Most recently, Loïc Wacquant postulated that: "postindustrial modernization translates, on the one hand, into the multiplication of highly skilled and highly remunerated positions for university-trained professional and technical staff and, on the other, into the deskilling and outright elimination of millions of jobs as well as the swelling of casual employment slots for uneducated workers." Hence, for example, "the city of Hamburg" writes Wacquant "sports both the highest proportion of millionaires and the highest incidence of public assistance receipt in Germany."¹⁰⁷

Class and uneven development

We are doomed to lurch from embracing to criticizing the "dual city" unless what I call "the cunning of class" is explicitly spelled out. Marx inherited Engels' thinking, or rather tinkering, with class with all the strings attached. Marx's double vision of class, or its two facets i.e. theoretical and empirical/historical, corresponding to Engels' proletariat and working-class, has been widely acknowledged. When understood as a social grouping rather than a social process, "class analysis involves sorting individuals into mutually exclusive class categories, often a frustrating analytical project."¹⁰⁸ In his historical writings, and most notably in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx did not squeeze empirical reality into a procrustean bed of a preconceived class duality. Instead, as Balibar and many others have noted, "the 'two-class' or 'three class' schemas explode in a series of subdivisions," and Marx arrived not at a dichotomous class structure, but rather at its numerous and sociologically distinct "fractions."¹⁰⁹

As in Engels' case, "the interplay between two seemingly disparate conceptual systems – the historical and the theoretical – is crucial to the explication of the class concept in all of its fullness."¹¹⁰ The cunning of class lurks precisely in the fact that class's empirical manifestations are ontologically separate from class as an abstraction. "It is not reason," wrote Hegel, "which places itself in opposition and

¹⁰⁵ Alice O'Connor, "Understanding inequality in the late twentieth-century metropolis: new perspectives on the enduring racial divide," in *Urban Inequality: Evidence from Four Cities*, ed. Alice O'Connor, Chris Tilly, and Lawrence Bobo (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001), 1.

¹⁰⁶ Alexander J. Reichl, "Rethinking the Dual City," *Urban Affairs Review* 42, no. 5 (May 1, 2007): 659-687.

¹⁰⁷ Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), 264.

¹⁰⁸ Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff, "Re/Presenting Class," 17.

¹⁰⁹ Such as industrial proletariat, lumpenproletariat, petite bourgeoisie, industrialists, financiers, merchant capitalists, management, landed aristocracy, peasantry; Balibar, "Masses, Classes, Ideas," 144. See also: David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Verso, 2007), 24-26; Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 110-113.

¹¹⁰ Harvey, *Limits*, 27.

struggle, or puts itself in danger; it holds itself safe from attack and uninjured in the background and sends the particular of passion into the struggle to be worn down.”¹¹¹ The same can be said for the “cunning of class.” The tension between “repertoires of ‘matter-of-fact’ knowledge, daily work, and reproductive routines, and the more abstract rationalizations and legitimizations,” the way violence of abstraction as “lived and produced in specific temporal and spatial relationships”¹¹² constitutes the very cunning of class.

For both Engels and Marx, class was essentially relational,¹¹³ and by being relational it was necessarily abstract. By extension it was dual too, because duality was simply a derivative of its relational character. As Charles Tilly insisted, categories of inequality, i.e. a set of “paired and unequal categories” such as black/white, male/female, citizen/foreigner, Muslim/Jew and so forth do structure the world of social interaction, but are nonetheless “to an important degree organizationally interchangeable.”¹¹⁴ What he called “durable inequality,” and what I mean by uneven development, is perpetuated precisely through oscillations between different categorical principles.¹¹⁵ Most such categories as subject to what Sennett described as the logic of purification. In a community “the only transaction for the group to engage in is that of purification, of rejection or chastisement of those who are not ‘like’ the others. Since the symbolic materials usable in forming collective personality are unstable, communal purification is unending, a continual quest for the loyal American, the authentic Aryan, the ‘genuine’ revolutionary.”¹¹⁶ Such principles of inclusion and exclusion are of course subject to change, and the spatial formations that underpin them will likewise always melt into air eventually. And it is this very melting-into-air, the ever changing social landscape, that constitutes the *modus operandi* of class. Because of its cunning class remains in the background of this dynamic process. It is, therefore, critical to distinguish class conceptually and politically from the various forms of categorical inequality. It is one of the greatest illusions of contemporary urban life that community-based politics (no matter if in favor of inclusion or exclusion) can mitigate the “atomizing” quality of the modern city. On the contrary, as Sennett put it, “when people today seek to have a full and open emotional relations with each other, they succeed only in wounding each other.” As a result, community-oriented “acts of fantasy” only reinforce the real urban isolation. Furthermore, “the more a fantasized [collective] personality dominates the life of a group, the less can that group act to advance its collective interest.”¹¹⁷ This is how, class, thanks to its cunning, does not become an object of political contention, and holds itself uninjured.

¹¹¹ Hegel in: Nicholas Bunnin, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), 156.

¹¹² Don Kalb, *Expanding Class: Power and Everyday Politics in Industrial Communities, The Netherlands, 1850-1950*, Comparative and international working-class history (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 20, 23.

¹¹³ For this see, for example, E. P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1980), 11.

¹¹⁴ Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1998), 7-9.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹¹⁶ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 223.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 223, see also: 298-300.

As it allegedly arises from conflict, “dual city” promises to be a dynamic notion. As its many critics have pointed out, it fails to deliver its promise and remains thoroughly essentialist and static. Dual cities had existed long before Engels’ Manchester. In Plato’s *Republic*, for example, we find a description of Greek cities rent by struggles over property: within each city, Plato wrote, “there are two” cities, “warring with each other, one of the poor, and the other of the rich.”¹¹⁸ Likewise, feudal cities have been described as fundamentally and hopelessly dual.¹¹⁹ As Judit Bodnár pointed out, “the notion of social and urban duality captures a lot but masks even more. The ‘dual city’ grasps the unevenness of social and urban change, but hides the complexity and historicity of these changes.”¹²⁰ Just as uneven development conceived as “universal metaphysics” blunts its theoretical edge by elapsing into a narrative of a Manichean struggle between the rich and the poor,¹²¹ notions such as dual city or dual society, by reifying what is a historically-produced relation into a quasi-sociological entity, cannot be more than a metaphor. And it is precisely beyond the language of spatial metaphors that we need to move.¹²²

It is better, therefore, to speak of urban dualities in terms of uneven development. The dual Manchester clearly resulted from the wage labor relation – something Neil Smith described as capitalism’s tendency for equalization. It is a process whereby the wage labor relation, and all its corollaries, is universalized in geographical expansion. Hence, equalization facilitates homogenization of space, and the “annihilation of space by time is [its] ultimate if never fully realized result.”¹²³ Yet equalization is always counterbalanced by differentiation. The latter follows from division of labor, and in turn divides space into various scales. This includes production of the urban scale, and the city as a competitive labor market. Equalization produces the “proletariat,” and is manifested mainly in the place of work. Differentiation, however, engenders the “working-class,” and is responsible, for example, for the separation of the place of work from the place of residence or the residential zoning of cities. Inconclusive dual city debate, therefore, stems from an erroneous interpretation of the relation between equalization and differentiation. Together with fears of a “single industrial society”¹²⁴ or “one-dimensional man,” “dual city” belongs to the family of capitalist dystopias spurred by equalization but always counterbalanced by differentiation. Searching for a dual city in the literal sense is therefore a wholly quixotic endeavor. It may add to the avalanche of moral indignation against modern cities, but hardly contributes to our understanding of how they actually work.

¹¹⁸ Plato and Allan David Bloom, *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 100.

¹¹⁹ Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, 77.

¹²⁰ Bodnár, “Metaphors We Live In: Dual Cities, Uneven Development and the Splitting of Unitary Frames,” 23.

¹²¹ Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1991), 98.

¹²² Neil Smith and Cindi Katz, “Grounding Metaphor: towards a spatialized politics,” in , ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London: Routledge, 1993), 67-83.

¹²³ Smith, *Uneven Development*, 114.

¹²⁴ Adna Ferrin Weber quoted in: Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 129.

Antinomies of equalization and differentiation

The tension between equalization and differentiation captures, according to Smith, the very dynamic of capitalism. “This contradiction emanating from the core of the capitalist mode of production,” he argues, “inscribes itself in the landscape as the extant pattern of uneven development.”¹²⁵ Relative domination of either tendency produces often radically dissimilar outcomes. Although it was “more an outgrowth of accident than any other city,”¹²⁶ structured coherence of Engelsian Manchester was the outcome of the ravages of unmitigated equalization. During what Andrew and Lynn Lees called the “era of disruption” (1750-1850) equalization truly bulldozed European urban landscape. For the two centuries prior to it, the European urban network had remained “remarkably stable.” Cities grew gradually. “When more buildings were needed, contractors filled in back gardens or built upwards.” When Amsterdam expanded in the seventeenth century, “new circles of canals were added to the older core.”¹²⁷ The pre-industrial city “was mostly concerned with administrative, commercial, craft-related, and religious matters” and hence “dominance of the town was externally imposed.” Only after the British, as Arrighi had put it, “internalized production,” and centralized it in a place like Manchester, the city started being “reproduced as part of the accumulation process.”¹²⁸

“From their inception,” writes Harvey, “cities have arisen through geographical and social concentration of a surplus product.”¹²⁹ Just as in the pre-capitalist city surpluses were “mobilized” (for political and symbolic ends), and in the industrial city they were “produced” (but never put to further use), only during what the Lees’ called the “era of reconstruction” (1850-1914)¹³⁰ surpluses became “absorbed,” and hence urbanization was fully “internalized” by capitalism.¹³¹ This was first tried out in Second Empire Paris. Following “one of the first clear, and European-wide, crises of both unemployed surplus capital and surplus labor,”¹³² Haussmann employed some of that surpluses and by developing a “proto-Keynesian system of debt-financed infrastructural urban improvements” he “bludgeoned Paris into modernity.”¹³³ It was a response to problems accrued during the “era of disruption.” Industrial cities, as its many critics pointed out, were no longer sustainable. If industrialization continued unabated, noted a publicist in 1844, then cities like Manchester will not “keep up their own populations. Cut off suppliers of labourers from without, and these towns, in sixty years, will be without inhabitants.” Hence,

¹²⁵ Smith, *Uneven Development*, 97, 131. see also: Richard A. Walker, “Two Sources of Uneven Development Under Advanced Capitalism: Spatial Differentiation and Capital Mobility,” *Review of Radical Political Economics* 10, no. 3 (October 1, 1978): 28-38. And See: Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America; Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil*, Rev. and enl. ed. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), 9.

¹²⁶ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 86.

¹²⁷ Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 13, 17.

¹²⁸ Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 201.

¹²⁹ David Harvey, “The Right to the City,” *New Left Review* 53 (2008): 24.

¹³⁰ Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 283.

¹³¹ Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 53.

¹³² Harvey, “The Right to the City,” 25.

¹³³ David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 2-3.

he stressed, the necessity to introduce “paved streets, covered sewers, ventilation, and a supply of water.”¹³⁴ Before Haussmann even the most spectacular urban projects might have “stood out by virtue of their scale and aesthetic pretensions [but they] had little effect on the city as a whole and on the lives of most of its inhabitants.”¹³⁵ Instead of “collections of partial plans of public thoroughfares considered without ties or connections,” Haussmann developed a “general plan which was nevertheless detailed enough to properly coordinate diverse local circumstances. Now urban space was perceived and treated as a “totality in which different quarters of the city and different functions were brought into relation to each other to form a working whole.”¹³⁶

Haussmann’s aggrandizement of Paris, “the most famous of all of the efforts to remake large portions of a major city undertaken anywhere during [the nineteenth] century” made entire Europe “gush with admiration.”¹³⁷ He also revolutionized the scale of urban investments. When “plans for a new boulevard [were presented to Haussmann, he] threw them back ... saying: ‘not wide enough ... you have it 40 meters wide and I want it 120.’” Between 1852 and 1870 the length of Paris’ street system increased by twelve per cent, average street width doubled, and the sewer system expanded fourfold. Supply of water per inhabitant doubled, and so did the number of trees along streets. The area of municipal parks skyrocketed from forty-seven to 4,500 acres. Industry was driven out of the center, as the latter turned into a site of splendor and consumption. This is how Paris became the “city of light,” a center of consumption, tourism and pleasure; “the cafes, department stores, fashion industry and grand expositions all changed urban living so that it could absorb vast surpluses through consumerism.”¹³⁸ In this, Haussmann did not unmake the industrial city; rather, he changed the emphasis from mass production to mass consumption. The department store, as Sennett reminded, “is a response to the factory.” Haussmannization allowed for mass transit of people within the city, or to be precise, for “moving workers to work and to the stores.” In early nineteenth century Paris of crooked and narrow streets, a “journey by foot which today could take fifteen minutes, at that time required an hour and a half.” Hagglng ceased being the hallmark of retail commerce – shopping became silent and passive. Large department stores, ran like factories by a salaried bureaucracy, arose a code of belief in which “investment of personal feeling [into commodities and shopping] and passive observation were being joined; to be out in public was at once a personal and a passive experience.”¹³⁹ The urban experience became that of a spectacle.

Haussmann was the first to demonstrate that it is “possible to stave off crises ... by transforming ‘a great part of capital into fixed capital which does not serve as agency of direct production,’” such as housing, railways, canals, roads, aqueducts

¹³⁴ Robert Seeley in: Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 121.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹³⁶ Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 111.

¹³⁷ Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 169.

¹³⁸ Harvey, “The Right to the City,” 26.

¹³⁹ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 143, 145.

and so forth.¹⁴⁰ This has a number of short-term advantages: “if fixed capital is lent out rather than sold, then it functions as a material equivalent of money capital. As such, it can circulate provided the value embodied in it is recovered over its lifetime and provided that it earns *interest*.”¹⁴¹ In other words, investment in urban expansion is not productive in the same way as investment in manufacturing of commodities. It is much easier to extract monopoly rent from real estate than from commodities. “A rate of return on money capital can be had by investing in old property as well as in the production of new. Idle money capital can just as easily be lent out as property as it can in money form. Since a part of the use value of property depends upon its relative location, money capitalists can even invest in the land and in the future rent it can command.” Hence, “*money capital is now being invested in appropriation rather than in production*.”¹⁴²

The logic of the production of space is hence different from that of the production of commodities. The former allows, for example, to value some areas higher than other, and hence extract monopoly rent. It is more akin to, but not congruent with, what Baucom dubbed “speculative logic.” It also melded with the development of the credit system. “If housing is to be produced as a commodity,” Harvey explains, “then renting or borrowing of money becomes essential. Without the interventions of the landlord, the credit system and the state, capital would be denied access” to this realm.¹⁴³ This fundamentally altered what used to be a relatively simple class polarization in the workplace. Workers, exploited by industrial capital, now became swayed and cajoled into the system by finance capital. To be sure, Engels was perceptive of this: by 1892 “niggardly extra extortions of former years had lost all importance and had become actual nuisances,” and class conflict was replaced by sermons of “peace and harmony.” This stemmed from the expanding scale of capitalism: the “greater the [corporation], and with it the number of hands, the greater the loss and inconvenience caused by every conflict between master and men.”¹⁴⁴ And indeed, as “worker’s savings blend with those of money capitalists in ways that often render them indistinguishable,”¹⁴⁵ it is in workers’ interest to defend capitalism as it now provides them, via the credit system among other institutions, with the means of reproduction as the working classes, while it maintains the rate of profit at the same time.

Capitalism and space

Internalization of space

The language of “internalizations” I have employed above begs some explanation. The Braudelian ontology of capitalism, that Arrighi was inspired by, was one

¹⁴⁰ Harvey, *Limits*, 227.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 227-228.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 234, emphasis mine.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁴⁴ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 27.

¹⁴⁵ Harvey, *Limits*, 230.

comprising three “stories.” “The lowest and until very recently the broadest layer is that of an extremely elementary and mostly self-sufficient economy.” Above this layer of *material life* there exists – “the favoured terrain of the *market economy*, with its many horizontal communications between the different markets.” Then above all this, in the “attic of world economy”¹⁴⁶ there is a “zone of the *anti-market*, where the great predators roam and the law of the jungle operates. This – today as in the past, before and after the industrial revolution – is the real home of *capitalism*.”¹⁴⁷ Likewise, for Polanyi the global market lays not within but without the economy. His narrative is precisely one of how local economies based upon the principles of reciprocity, redistribution, householding (subsistence) and barter have throughout centuries resisted their subjugation to long-distance exchange and ravages caused by moneymaking pure and simple.¹⁴⁸ The grand transformation he described was precisely the descent of the “predators” to the lower rungs of the world economy, whereby they appropriated its elements, and reshape them in the image of their pecuniary rationality. For Polanyi this was the origin of the fictitious commodities, and the divorce of “man” from money, labor and land.

Just as for Arrighi every hegemony is based upon *one* such “internalization,” in Polanyi’s account the picture is somehow more complex. Arrighi insists on this in order to highlight that every new “internalization” expands the scale of the world economy. Unlike Polanyi, Arrighi does not account for the commoditization of land, and, more importantly, for urbanization. Inspired by Charles Tilly, and his model of capitalism where accumulation of the means of coercion (state-making) is contrasted to the accumulation of capital (city-making),¹⁴⁹ Arrighi developed a distinction between territorialist and capitalist “logics of power.” Under the former, “control over territory and population is the objective, and control over mobile capital the means” whereas under the latter “control over mobile capital is the objective, and control over territory and population the means.”¹⁵⁰ For both Tilly and Arrighi, money and territory are conceptually divorced. Just as during the Iberian/Genoese and Dutch hegemonies this indeed was the case, in the latter part of the British, and especially during the American supremacy, this separation was broken apart.

First, Arrighi argued, the Dutch, relative to the Genoese, internalized “protection costs.” The conquest of the Americas, which was the fulcrum of the first systemic cycle of accumulation, was executed through the “dichotomous agency consisting an (Iberian) aristocratic territorialist component – which specialized in the provision of protection” and of a (Genoese) bourgeois capitalist component, that withdrew from trade into high finance due to their “ability to convert the intermittent flow of silver from America to Seville into a steady stream.”¹⁵¹ This proved inefficient and

¹⁴⁶ I borrowed this metaphor from David Harvey.

¹⁴⁷ Braudel quoted in: Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 10.

¹⁴⁸ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, chap. 4 and 5.

¹⁴⁹ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, Rev. pbk. ed., Studies in social discontinuity (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).

¹⁵⁰ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 33-34.

¹⁵¹ Braudel quoted in: *Ibid.*, 125-126.

the Dutch learned from their foes' mistakes. Their chartered companies "produced their own protection ... at costs that were lower and more calculable than the costs charged to caravans and ships by local powers in the form of tribute, fees, and outright extortions."¹⁵² The Dutch colonial brutality "matched or even surpassed the already abysmal standards established by the crusading Iberians...But this brutality was wholly internal to a business logic of action and buttressed, instead of undermining, profitability." Just as the Iberian plunder of the Americas was driven by religious rather than pecuniary incentives, the Dutch economized warfare, and avoided military involvements that "had no direct or indirect justification in the 'maximization' of profit."¹⁵³

Both the Genoese and the Dutch specialized in long-distance trade and high finance, and "as far as possible kept production activities outside their organizational domain."¹⁵⁴ The Dutch global commercial supremacy urged their potential competitors to build "autarkic economies," so both producers and consumers of commodities would be "liberated" from the relation of dependency on the foreign (i.e. Dutch) intermediation in trade.¹⁵⁵ While space remained "external" to Dutch imperialist pursuits, English territorialism became the expression of their ensuing subjugation of production "to the economizing tendencies typical of [capitalist business] enterprises."¹⁵⁶ Deindustrialization that followed financial expansion in first Florence and then Genoa, resulted in a spatial transplant of first textile and then metal industries to England. For a long time, however, England remained "a trading [and manufacturing] vessel moored to Europe; her entire economic life depended on the mooring-rope, the rate of exchange on the Antwerp market."¹⁵⁷ Only after her mooring-rope had been cut and the Dutch were removed from the apex of world economy by losing the Atlantic space-of-flows to the English, the latent industrial potential of Britain could be deployed. The Dutch could maintain supremacy in the Indian Ocean by simply controlling trading posts. In the Atlantic, "trade control over production areas was at least as important as control over trading ports."¹⁵⁸ Industrial revolution was, therefore, a simultaneous expansion of both English textile and metal industries during the Dutch-led financial expansion, whereby industrial production was employed for achieving world supremacy on an unprecedented scale.¹⁵⁹ As steam and machinery "revolutionized industrial technology, industrial expansion itself became the main factor of integration of markets of the whole world into a single world market."¹⁶⁰

Consequently, as Engels noted in 1892, Britain became an "industrial sun" around which an agricultural hinterland revolved. "All other countries were to become for

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 251.

England what Ireland already was—markets for her manufactured goods, supplying her in return with raw materials and food.”¹⁶¹ As I will discuss in Chapters Two and Three, the Dutch had already done this with Poland-Lithuania, only that they externalized rather than internalized production costs. Consequently, their command over the grain-based Baltic space-of-flows was enormously weak, based merely on the relations of exchange. Global expansion of the English industry, on the other hand, was achieved thanks to first institutional subjugation of the massive Indian textile industry by the British East India Company and its “subsequent destruction by the cheap products of Lancashire.”¹⁶² India became the jewel in the English colonial crown, as “political control over large, captive, and unprotected economic spaces became the main source of external economies for British business.”¹⁶³ The “underdeveloped” hinterland became crucial also as a market for the British-produced goods. This, however, had its limits. As Engels noted in 1892, “new markets are getting scarcer every day” and even forcing “the Negroes of the Congo ... into the civilization attendant upon Manchester calicos, Staffordshire pottery, and Birmingham hardware,”¹⁶⁴ was hardly sufficient to rescue profits. The globe had ran out of “blank spots” where capitalism could easily move into.

The rough watershed came with the final partitioning of Africa in the 1880s; from that point onwards, argued Neil Smith, space had been fully “internalized” by capitalism. “Pre-capitalist space,” he writes, “might well be described as a mosaic – a mosaic of exchange spaces (centers and hinterlands), constituted by a well-developed market system.”¹⁶⁵ Back then, “social expansion was achieved through geographical expansion; towns expanded into urban centers, pre-capitalist states expanded into modern nation-states, and the nation-states expanded where they could into colonial empires.”¹⁶⁶ Gradually “geographical space [was] dragged inexorably into the center of capital,” as it became “in itself a major way of protecting social and economic equilibrium and staving off crises.”¹⁶⁷ The frontier of capitalist expansion turned inward, and its energies were funneled into the remaking of spaces that have already been conquered. Henceforth “development and underdevelopment were no longer sporadically related but functionally related.”¹⁶⁸

The American century

Dutch internalization of coercion into capitalist expansion ushered in the so-called Westphalia system whereby European political space was sundered into sovereign states. Now even when sovereigns were at war, business between their subjects would continue unaffected. As politics became divorced from economics, property

¹⁶¹ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 32.

¹⁶² Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 263.

¹⁶³ Washbrook in: *Ibid.*, 264.

¹⁶⁴ Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 36.

¹⁶⁵ Smith, *Uneven Development*, 135.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

¹⁶⁸ Neil Smith, *American Empire Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*, California studies in critical human geography 9 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 17.

was now protected by the international inter-state system.¹⁶⁹ “This reorganization of political space in the interest of capital accumulation,” argued Arrighi, “marks the birth not just of the modern inter-state system, but also of capitalism as a world system.”¹⁷⁰ Within the Westphalia framework, space became external to economic pursuits and was subject mainly to political activities and inter-state warfare. Just as the Westphalia system was based upon “the principle that there was no authority operating above the inter-state system,” the British introduced “the principle that the laws operating within and between states were subject to the higher authority of a new, metaphysical entity: a world market ruled by its own ‘laws’.”¹⁷¹ Just as the world was “discovered” during the Genoese, and “conquered” during the British hegemony, in the course of the “American twentieth century” it was “consolidated into a system of national markets and transnational corporations centered on the United States.”¹⁷²

The long twentieth century was, therefore, the “century of geography,” as Neil Smith argued, in a twofold sense. First, direct territorial control, the hallmark of the British rule, was relinquished. After the project of internal colonization (by westward expansion) of the United States was completed in 1898, the logic of American expansion rebutted European colonialism.¹⁷³ Between the 1890s and 1919, a “closed global system” comprising of nation-state-bound markets emerged. The US strategy, as championed by President Wilson, was to “restructure the grammar of economic expansion” so a global political system would “absorb territorial conflicts while allowing economic business to proceed as usual.” The world was no longer integrated merely by production and a global market. Now it was integrated by an empire – the very first one in human history that had a truly planetary scope and ambition. The frontier of expansion was no longer outside of its borders. It was, as one of its architects put it, “on every continent.” Entire globe was now reconceptualized as “American Lebensraum.”¹⁷⁴ US capital “would refocus on controlling the flow of productive and finance capital into and out of sectors and places that could remain technically independent—self-determining—but that would, by dint of US economic power, be controlled, for all intents and purposes, by US interests.”¹⁷⁵ Of the 400 multinational corporations that in 1973 dominated the world economy, more than half were headquartered in the U.S.¹⁷⁶ The turn was from (British) “geopolitics” to (American) “geoeconomics.”¹⁷⁷

Second, except for the global scale, the American twentieth century was a century of geography also at the urban scale. This, in turn, had two aspects:

¹⁶⁹ Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, chap. 1.

¹⁷⁰ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 44.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 219.

¹⁷³ Smith, *American Empire Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*, xvii-xviii.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv, 27.

¹⁷⁵ Neil Smith, *The Endgame of Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 69, 71-72.

¹⁷⁶ Harold James Perkin, *The Third Revolution: Professional Elites in the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 45.

¹⁷⁷ Deborah Cowen and Neil Smith, “After Geopolitics? From the Geopolitical Social to Geoeconomics,” *Antipode* 41, no. 1 (2009): 22-48.

haussmannization and professionalization. In fact it was Germany and not the United States that initially led in both. From its unification in 1871, Germany pioneered what Arrighi called internalization of transaction costs, i.e. suspension of the free market in favor of vertically-integrated corporate capitalism. If in the 1880s “family capitalism was still the norm in Germany as it was in Britain, by the turn of the century a highly centralized corporate structure had taken its place.”¹⁷⁸ The American-based multinational corporation (of the 400 multinational corporations that in 1973 dominated the world economy, more than half were headquartered in the U.S.)¹⁷⁹ followed in the wake of the German organizational innovations. Likewise, as an American journalist reported with awe, because they have demonstrated “more of the scientific method than any other people,”¹⁸⁰ the Germans were in the forefront in the process of “haussmannization.” By 1880s, for example, most cities in Germany had gas works. A vast bulk of the new utilities was publically owned,¹⁸¹ and, as “building entailed borrowing,” the “indebtedness of local governments in Germany grew approximately fifty-fold” between 1850 and 1910.¹⁸² The urban revolution and what Harold Perkin called the “professional revolution” were to sides of the same process.¹⁸³ Long before the American cities were taken over by “white collars,” haussmannized Germany was populated by “salaried masses” – a new model of an urbanite that eclipsed the working-classes of the industrial era.¹⁸⁴

Germany remained only a runner-up in the rivalry for leading the twentieth century because it did not have the American “gift of geography,” and its *Lebensraum*, as the two World Wars demonstrated, was tight indeed. It was the United States that enjoyed a continental size, an island position, and was located between world’s two major oceans, which in the quest for world domination tipped the scale in its favor.¹⁸⁵ When the German quest for *Lebensraum* failed, it was clear that the United States would have a clear path for world supremacy. Already during World War Two, a “lengthy evaluation of Haussmann’s efforts appeared in *Architectural Forum*. It documented in detail what he had done, attempted an analysis of his mistakes but sought to recuperate his reputation as one of the greatest urbanists of all time.” Its author was Robert Moses, who after 1945 “did to New York what Haussmann had done to Paris. That is, Moses changed the scale of thinking about the urban process” by “a system of highways and infrastructural transformations, suburbanization and the total reengineering of not just the city but also the whole metropolitan region.”¹⁸⁶ Then, this model was exported to the state at large. In the American middle-class suburb of the 1950s, the “single-function planning” (congruence of class and community) first devised by Haussmann “reached an

¹⁷⁸ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 266-267.

¹⁷⁹ Perkin, *The Third Revolution*, 45.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in: Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 169.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁸³ Perkin, *The Third Revolution*.

¹⁸⁴ Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany* (London: Verso, 1998).

¹⁸⁵ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 275-276.

¹⁸⁶ Harvey, “The Right to the City,” 27.

extreme instance.”¹⁸⁷ In the remaining part of the American twentieth century, this model of combined professionalization and urbanization was exported to those locations that were important for the U.S. geoeconomic pursuits.

The fall of public man

After capitalism had internalized urbanization, class is no longer produced in the hidden abode of production, and then merely “displaced” onto the fragmented spaces of the city.¹⁸⁸ Rather, I have argued in this chapter, we should speak of class in terms of uneven development, precisely because class antagonisms have been spatialized (but not “displaced”) on both global and urban scales. Class, therefore, is not only “the process of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus labor,”¹⁸⁹ but also a relation in space as well as in time. It follows that the way inequality is perpetuated nowadays is far more complex than it was in the age of Engelsian Manchester. As Arrighi noted, phases of financialization are characterized by even more glaring class disparities than phases of material expansion. Adam Smith already pointed out that “where the people are chiefly maintained by the employment of capital, they are in general industrious, sober and thriving,” but where they are “chiefly maintained by the spending of revenue, they are in general idle, dissolute, and poor.”¹⁹⁰ As Kevin Phillips argued, “finance cannot nurture a [large middle] class, because only a small elite portion of any national population – Dutch, British or American – can share in the profits of bourse, merchant bank and countinghouse. Manufacturing, transportation and trade supremacies, by contrast, provide a broader national prosperity in which the ordinary person can man the production lines, mines, mills, wheels, mainsails and nets.”¹⁹¹ This was as true for Edwardian Britain, “periwig” Netherlands and for Spain during the “Age of the Genoese,” as it is for our most recent financialization.

Material expansion in Victorian Manchester engendered social polarizations that were all but minor. If it is true, however, that financialization produces more social polarization, so it is even more surprising that class has been eclipsed in the social sciences. In *City, Class and Power* Manuel Castells once advocated for a “new type of Marxism, a Marxism rooted in the theory of class struggle rather than in the logic of capital, a Marxism which is more concerned with historical relevance than with formal coherence, a Marxism more open to its own transformation than to the doctrinal faithfulness to the ‘sacred texts.’”¹⁹² Like many others, he soon abjured this project, and himself “even more thoroughly treated the linkage between capitalist accumulation and class struggle in a formalistic and reductionist way.”¹⁹³ He turned to the notion of the “dual city,” for scrutinizing “new” forms of inequality under financialization and in what Adam Smith described as a “speculative city.”

¹⁸⁷ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 134-5, 297.

¹⁸⁸ Kian Tajbakhsh, *The Promise of the City: Space, Identity, and Politics in Contemporary Social Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 74-81.

¹⁸⁹ Gibson-Graham, Resnick, and Wolff, “Re/Presenting Class,” 18.

¹⁹⁰ in: Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 24.

¹⁹¹ Phillips in: Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 315.

¹⁹² Manuel Castells, *City, Class, and Power* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 12.

¹⁹³ Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 140.

As Judit Bodnár pointed out, there is a “chain of equivalence” starting from “dual city” through “global city” to “New York City.”¹⁹⁴ Between 1977 and 1987, New York sharply deindustrialized and turned its economy toward finance, real estate and insurance, and hence became the prototype of the “new dual city,”¹⁹⁵ – the most spectacular material manifestation of the twentieth century financial expansion. Yet, the duality of industrial Manchester, and colonial Bombay, and contemporary New York City is fundamentally different. Reducing them to a common spatial metaphor is to actually obscure the social processes responsible for the proliferation of inequalities.¹⁹⁶

If it is true, as Lefebvre maintained, that the industrial revolution was all but a minor prelude to a more formidable one, the urban revolution,¹⁹⁷ then it follows that the task of combating increasing polarization can be achieved only through urban-based contentious politics. In a devastating review of the quintessentially Rousseauian, to wit, anti-urban, *Planet of Slums*, Tom Angotti argued that Mike Davis’ apocalyptic clarion is “an expression of moralistic outrage that one would expect from a Westerner who discovered for the first time that the conditions of most people living in cities around the world are much worse than in Los Angeles and Amsterdam.” Further, Davis’ “dualistic analysis oversimplifies the complex urban world,” and takes us a step back in forging “the new geography of centrality and marginality.”¹⁹⁸ The dual city metaphor underlines most of the book, and especially the chapter titled “Haussmann in the Tropics,” where he describes how in Nairobi, Dhaka, Bombay, Delhi, and other Third World metropolises, the vast majority of urbanites inhabit “slums of ant-hill density, while the wealthy enjoy their gardens and open spaces.”¹⁹⁹ Financialization in the West, and urban explosion in the Third World that we have witnessed since the 1970s, were accompanied by the greatest industrial revolution in world history ever, whereby China became the new workshop of the world. “The urban,” as Lefebvre insisted, “does not eliminate industrial contradictions,”²⁰⁰ only the relation between the two constantly evolves. The Chinese economic takeoff has been fuelled, for example, by exacerbating the rural-urban dichotomy, and not eradicating it.²⁰¹ Indeed, “global urbanism is a highly contradictory process: ... gentrification centralizes the city; suburbanization decentralizes it; rural-urban migration [sustains industrialization and] recentralizes

¹⁹⁴ Bodnár, “Metaphors We Live In: Dual Cities, Uneven Development and the Splitting of Unitary Frames,” 10.

¹⁹⁵ Manuel Castells, “Information Technology, the Restructuring of Capital-Labor Relationships, and the Rise of the Dual City,” in *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*, ed. Ida Susser (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2002), 285-313.

¹⁹⁶ Bodnár, “Metaphors We Live In: Dual Cities, Uneven Development and the Splitting of Unitary Frames,” 19, 17.

¹⁹⁷ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 139.

¹⁹⁸ Tom Angotti, “Apocalyptic anti-urbanism: Mike Davis and his planet of slums,” *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (December 2006): 962.

¹⁹⁹ Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 95.

²⁰⁰ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 167.

²⁰¹ Joel Andreas, “Changing Colours in China,” *New Left Review* 54 (2008): 129.

the metropolis: all of this calls out for a scaled analysis of uneven urban development in a global world.”²⁰²

Only when such an analysis takes into account our vexing nonsynchronicity, can it contribute to forging a class-based political agenda. Resistance towards capitalism has so far, to borrow Bloch’s terms, mobilized the “non-synchronous zones of nature and human relations,” and hinged upon the articulation of pent-up history.²⁰³ As a result, “we remain imprisoned in the cultural terms of the 19th Century. Thus the end of a belief in public life is not a break with 19th Century bourgeois culture, but rather an escalation of its terms.”²⁰⁴ Such “unsettled past,” to use Bloch’s vocabulary again, directly translates into an “impeded future.” Just as our political culture and institutions gradually accommodated to the Industrial Revolution, today they are unsuited for meeting the challenges mounted by the Urban Revolution that, if Lefebvre was right, is still under way. Hence, Mike Davis’ inventory of ills found in urban infernos—painted with a truly Dickensian brush—continues an old tradition of anti-urban indignation criticized by Sennett. “There is nothing in the catalogue of Victorian misery, as narrated by Dickens, Zola or Gorky, that doesn’t exist somewhere in the Third World city today,” writes Davis. “Primitive forms of exploitation,” he stresses, “have been given new life by postmodern globalization.”²⁰⁵ If so, then as Angotti insisted, we ought to revisit Engels and not Dickens for understanding contemporary marginality. Except for describing urban decay, Engels also “launched a scathing critique of the urban reformers whose moral outrage led to the totally ineffective solutions”²⁰⁶ that merely shifted the problem around without ever solving it. Restricting critique to scaremongering only attests that “our stunted imaginations have largely lost the ability to think what a society other than capitalism” might look like. “It is time,” calls Neil Smith, “to think about revolution again.”²⁰⁷ Indeed. By revisiting Engels’ “sacred text,” I hoped precisely to excavate portents of the new in the lineaments of the old and to stimulate our stunted imagination to envision a better, more democratic and just future.

The retreat from class, and the embrace of more “tangible” subjectivities such as race, ethnicity or gender, marks an important regress as far as such emancipatory politics are concerned. As Gáspár Miklós Tamás has pointed out in a Sennettian spirit, most of our political efforts are directed at the struggle to abolish forms of inequality that are pre-modern: racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, agism and so forth. Likewise, what he described as “Rousseauian socialism” has aimed at combating social exclusion, privilege of birth, discrimination, relations of obedience and

²⁰² Neil Smith, “Afterword to the Third Edition,” in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 263-264.

²⁰³ Durst, “Weimar Modernism,” 20-21.

²⁰⁴ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 262.

²⁰⁵ Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 186.

²⁰⁶ Tom Angotti, “Apocalyptic anti-urbanism: Mike Davis and his planet of slums,” *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research* 30, no. 4 (December 2006): 966, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2006.00705.x.

²⁰⁷ Neil Smith, “Another revolution is possible: Foucault, ethics, and politics,” *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space* 25, no. 2 (April 2007): 191.

deference that are *not* the hallmarks of capitalism but of the persisting “old regime.”²⁰⁸ “Socialism as a political movement,” wrote Tamás, “was the tool of capitalist modernization not only in the East, but also in Central and Western Europe; the bourgeoisie itself did, historically speaking, very little by way of creating, or even fighting for, modern capitalist society.”²⁰⁹ Wherever socialist revolutions broke out, they did so in territories subservient from the point of view of class, where pre-capitalist forms of inequality loomed large. In 1917, Russia was a feudal and not a capitalist society. It was also predominantly rural and not urban. The very same applies to countries that became socialist after 1945. Only “direct (coercive) social domination was ever overturned by popular revolt.”²¹⁰ Dissolution of the dual industrial city, and the emergence of “capitalism without a proletariat,” or in fact without the working-classes in Balibar’s sense, as well as without the bourgeoisie the way “we know them historically, as two distinct cultural, ideological and status groups,”²¹¹ is not a hindrance but an opportunity. Class rule has become ever more impersonal and abstract than in the days of Engels. Nowadays, the capitalist class is “anonymous and open, and therefore impossible to hate, to storm, to chase away.” Yet, this very fact “makes the historical work of destroying capitalism less parochial, it makes it indeed as universal, as abstract and as powerful as capitalism itself.”²¹²

Revival of cosmopolitanism and urban public life as well as a return to class are critical for that. As Sennett insists, this does not necessarily entails a return to pre-industrial city life. It does entail, however, learning a lesson from how the eighteenth century cosmopolis was “privatized” during the Industrial Revolution. In *ancien régime* cities, Sennett argued, strangers in public “aroused each other feelings without having to attempt to define themselves to each other.”²¹³ They were, in other words, sociable on impersonal grounds. Unlike today, in the age of the Enlightenment “clothes had a meaning independent of the wearer and the wearer’s body.”²¹⁴ They were not expressive of the inner self – the body was treated merely as a mannequin to be draped. “The private and the individual were not yet wedded.”²¹⁵ In that epoch of wigs and elaborate decorations, masks and face paint, the private self was blotted out in the public. At the same time, urbanites were surprisingly expressive. Eighteenth century was the age of “impersonal passion” – strangers emoted and jelled together in the public domain, but not as themselves; they socialized without becoming intimate. “Their spontaneity rebukes the notion that you must lay yourself bare in order to be expressive,”²¹⁶ Sennett noted. Pamphleteering—passionate and often vituperative—was anonymous and

²⁰⁸ Gáspár Miklós Tamás, “Telling the Truth about Class,” ed. Leo Pantich and Colin Leys, *Socialist Register* (2006): 230.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 238-239.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 253.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 254.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 255.

²¹³ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 64.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

impersonal; “it was considered unseemly for one person to visibly attack another in print.” The language of politics “was at a remove from intimate life.”²¹⁷

Rousseau was one of the first to conceive of the city as an expressive milieu, to argue that one’s inner self was lost in urban social enactments, and to cherish pastoral countryside as the place where one could “get back in touch” with oneself. Just as before when engaging in public affairs urbanites wore masks (not only figuratively but often practically too), during the Industrial Revolution masks became faces, and public appearances started serving as indices of personality. Now strangers were to “read” each others’ inner characteristics from their public appearances (such as clothes, gestures, and behavior). Thus the romantic figure of the prodigious artist and revolutionary, whose public standing depended on inner traits (such as their “genius”) entered the public turf. This is when popular interest (of increasingly passive and silent audiences) in the private life of public figures germinated. Intimacy became the new ideal of sociability, whereas impersonality became a moral evil. This is how Rousseau, “the greatest writer on, and the most constant student of, urban public life” arrived at “the celebration of the simple, truthful yoke.”²¹⁸ Our political culture followed in his wake. Worse still, Rousseauian fantasies of a closely-knit community where human intimacy could be attained could only be achieved through the means of coercion. “Political tyranny and the search for individual authenticity go hand in hand,” warned Sennett.²¹⁹ If “community” (either local or national, i.e. “the people) is the ideal, then the politics of purification is the only method. This was indeed the *modus operandi* of the hopelessly Rousseauian “people’s republics” in post-war Eastern Europe – as I will discuss in Chapters Four and Seven. The politics of purification did not alleviate the modern urban estrangement. On the contrary, it is directly responsible for engendering our current nonsynchronism, direct exclusion and persecution.

“Revolt against repression which is not a revolt against personality in public is not a revolt,” argued Sennett. “When a revolution is conceived of in personal terms, it becomes more impracticable. One has to be ‘a revolutionary’ in order to participate in the revolution.” Because each collective action rests on a calibration of various interests, “this fundamental intrusion of personality is quite likely to make the revolution not so much a matter of concrete activity as one of symbolic gestures and of change experienced in fantasy.”²²⁰ Unlike class, community - i.e. a “phenomenon of collective being rather than collective action,” can never become a platform for effective emancipatory politics.²²¹ “The revolutionary line of knots,” argued Bloch, “in which the contradiction eventually becomes entangled at a single point and drives with leaps for the revolutionary solution, can take place only in keeping with synchronous contradiction.”²²² Only challenging class head-on can help us solve our

²¹⁷ Ibid., 100, 105.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 115, 120.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 121.

²²⁰ Ibid., 184, 187.

²²¹ Ibid., 223.

²²² Bloch, “Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics,” 33.

current predicaments. To envision class-based politics, however, “is emotionally and intellectually difficult,” as Tamás warned, “since it goes against the grain of moral indignation, which is, of course, the main reason people become socialists.”²²³ A return to class, therefore, would not entail replacing various identities by class, but rather it would seek to recognize class as an entity ontologically distinct, if not prior, to the various forms of “categorical inequality.” It is unlikely that capitalism will once emerge “pure and simple,” stripped of all the vestiges of pre-modern social forces. Instead, capitalism has only exacerbated them, so even the very cradle of “our long contemporaneity,” Britain, still hosts “bastard capitalism” pivoted upon “imperfect, immature and inadequately modern institutions.”²²⁴ Rousseauian socialism is hence hopelessly utopian, as it seeks to achieve what it cannot – nonsynchronicity will never be eradicated, but will always return in ever different guises. The only *practical* alternative, therefore, is class. Challenging an abstraction, even if it is a “lived abstraction,” is far more daunting, yet, and this is a crucial point, it also offers much more in reward.

This is not to say that nonsynchronism ought to be omitted. Quite the contrary: because the capitalist totality is multi-spatial and multi-temporal, nonsynchronicity will never perish. Therefore, as Bloch insisted, “the task is to extrapolate the elements of the nonsynchronous contradiction which are capable of antipathy and transformation, that is, those hostile to capitalism and homeless in it, and to refit them to function in a different context.”²²⁵ This is why most of this study is devoted to the changing facets of class in Poland. In the remaining chapters from Part One, I will describe how the Italian and Dutch hegemonies were experienced in Poland, and how the Biblical “curse of Ham” was localized there and engendered local class relations, summed in the notion of *chamstwo*. Parts Two and Three of this study are devoted to the analysis of how *chamstwo* was urbanized in post-war Poland, and the city of Łódź in particular. I will analyze how *chamstwo* changed its meaning throughout centuries, and adapted to the changing material and social landscape – the three moments of material expansion in Poland – the feudal, industrial and urban. In the Afterword, I will return to the most recent and burning issues and I will argue that the “right to the city,” while being an universal cry, has to accommodate to such local patterns of class, uneven development and nonsynchronicity. Just as we have been propelled to “think globally and act locally” over the past two decades, in this study I follow Neil Smith’s advice to reverse that dictum: to think locally and act globally.²²⁶ Most of this study is devoted precisely to such local thinking. To the issue of global action I will return at the very end.

²²³ Tamás, “Telling the Truth about Class,” 228-229.

²²⁴ Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism: A Historical Essay on Old Regimes and Modern States* (London: Verso, 1991), 166-7.

²²⁵ Bloch, “Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics,” 36.

²²⁶ Neil Smith, “Geography, difference and the politics of scale,” in *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences*, ed. Joe Doherty, Elspeth Graham, and Mohammed H Malek (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1992), 57-79.



Photograph Three – The Poznański palace

POLAND'S CONFLICTED SPATIAL LEGACY

It is no accident that *Uneven Development* opens with a discussion of the “production of nature” and the debates surrounding American landscape. The difference between European colonialism and American imperialism is in part the difference between history and geography: “where the dominant symbols of the Old World drew their strength and legitimacy from history, the New World symbols were more likely to invest in nature,” noted Smith.¹ Just as it seems that the haussmannization of Paris constituted a very important empirical foundation for David Harvey’s theorizing, the quintessentially American “moral geography” represents the kernel of Neil Smith’s thinking about space. Of course, as Smith pointed out, appreciation of wilderness is an invention of the industrial epoch; yet the legacy of the conquest of the American continent is critical for understanding the twentieth century as a century of geography. Paradoxically, the eponymous long century is the least well-described in Arrighi’s book, and it should be understood, as I argued already, as marked by both urban and professional revolutions. Yet, “our long contemporaneity” comprises of more than just this heritage. While the American hegemony was dominated by a considerable erasure of historical legacies, it ought not to be overlooked that the capitalist totality is deeply nonsynchronous. This is largely so because it comprises of what in the world systems analysis would be referred to as “core” and “periphery.” The previous chapter was devoted to the analysis of the spatial peregrinations of the capitalist heartland. This and the following chapter will complement this one-sided picture, and describe the

¹ Smith, *Uneven Development*, 7.

centrality of class for both spatial and temporal uneven development in the capitalist world system.

Arrighi's analysis is engaged in a constant (if not always explicit) dialogue with Immanuel Wallerstein, whose work on the "refeudalization" of Eastern Europe and Latin America was path-breaking for the theory of uneven development at the global scale.² What in the world systems analysis would often be fixed as the homogenous and single "core" (England, or more generally the West) for Arrighi actually constituted a permanently mobile spatial epicenter of the world economy. His analysis focused mainly on the relations between the successive hegemonies and he paid relatively little heed to their relation with territories lying outside of the "core." For example, Arrighi noted that the Dutch ousted the Genoese by taking over the grain trade and capturing the Baltic space-of-flows, but does not analyze that this was possible only with the introduction of "second serfdom" in Poland, and with it becoming "an agrarian and raw-material producing colony of the West."³ In these two chapters I wish to complement that part of the story and argue that Arrighi's accumulation cycles can be understood in terms of changing relations between the "core" and territories peripheral to it. Only by combining Arrighi's and Wallerstein's insights can we fully understand the multi-spatial and multi-temporal facets of the capitalist totality.

The two Polands

The conundrum of dependency

Each hegemony, naturally, was based upon a plethora of both old and new relations of "dependency." The "colonial pattern" in which one area supplied another with raw materials was rather common in the European history, and, as Braudel noted, "it was subject to frequent [geographical] revisions." Venice had its colonies. England produced raw materials for Flanders, and so did Portugal.⁴ Wallerstein's approach was extensively criticized precisely for his inability to capture the enormous diversity, both spatial and temporal, of the core-periphery relations and hence of the capitalist totality.⁵ It was the work of Eric Wolf and Sidney Mintz that best alleviated that shortcoming. "The world of humankind," argued Wolf, "constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes." Only by understanding our

² Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, Studies in social discontinuity 1 (San Diego, Calif: Academic Press, 1974).

³ Marian Małowist, "Poland, Russia and Western Trade in the 15th and 16th Centuries," *Past and Present*, no. 13 (April 1958): 38, see also: Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, "The Itinerary of World-Systems Analysis; or, How to Resist Becoming a Theory," in *New Directions in Contemporary Sociological Theory*, ed. Joseph Berger and Morris Zelditch (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 358-376.

⁴ Wallerstein, *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, 97.

⁵For example by Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Public worlds 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 29-33.

concepts “as bundles of relationships, and by placing them back into the field from which they were abstracted, can we hope to avoid misleading inferences and increase our share of understanding.”⁶ The relation of “dependency” is therefore not a single arrow pointing into one direction (the West), but a complex bundle, anchored in a geographical field. In his *Europe and the People Without History*, Wolf actually excelled in untangling it, by showing how the rise of both the Dutch and the British was based on the set of relations they developed with distant and largely nonsynchronous social (and territorial) entities in Africa, Asia and the Americas. He also applied a similar approach to the study of Eastern European and Latin American nonsynchronism.⁷

To be sure, germs of such an argument were already present in Wallerstein's theory. His theoretical framework was in part inherited from Andre Gunder Frank and Owen Lattimore; the latter claimed that “civilization gave birth to barbarism” and that societies normally pigeonholed into various developmental stages in a linear model of history (foraging, feudalism, capitalism etc.) are actually part and parcel of a single system. The nonsynchronous territories are (in relation to the “core”) not as much prior in time, but rather external in space.⁸ It was Wolf who provided the most convincing evidence for that observation, and showed that it pertained not only to “feudal” Eastern Europe or “belated” Junker Germany, but also to hunting and gathering communities. “Most of the societies studied by anthropologists,” Wolf stressed, “are an outgrowth of the expansion of Europe and not the pristine precipitates of past evolutionary stages;” Western capitalism, therefore, developed precisely through the intensive interaction with societies that were very different to it.⁹

It was Wolf's close associate, Sidney Mintz, who fully debunked the myth of Western (or more specifically English) exceptionalism and its claim to have “invented” capitalism. In *Sweetness and Power*, Mintz demonstrated how industrial capitalism in Britain would have been impossible without turning the whole of the Caribbean into a massive sugar-cane plantation. Britain, he argued, could produce commodities for export only because its working classes consumed low-cost high-energy food substitutes (sugar, tea, rum, coffee, tobacco and the like) produced in their peripheries. This is how the British synchronism was directly contingent upon nonsynchronism not only of the deindustrialized Indian subcontinent but also of the

⁶ Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, 3.

⁷ Eric R Wolf, “The Second Serfdom in Eastern Europe and Latin America,” in *Pathways of Power: Building an Anthropology of the Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 272-288.

⁸ Wallerstein, *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, 98; see also: Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America; Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil*, 9, 221-241, Andre Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution; Essays on the Development of Underdevelopment and the Immediate Enemy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 350; for critique of Frank see: Ernesto Laclau, “Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America,” *New Left Review*, no. 62 (1971).

⁹ Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, 76 For a critique of evolutionary models of history see: Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984), 11, 25-26, 41-42.

slavery-based sugar production in the Caribbean. Further, by showing how before it became a British “periphery,” at least since 1500 the Caribbean represented a “frontier” shaped by virtually all European powers. The bundle of relations that constituted “the Caribbean” was hence highly complex both temporarily and spatially; the slave-cum-sugar complex, for example, was first developed by Arabs and Crusaders on Mediterranean islands, then adopted by Spain and Portugal on their Atlantic islands (e.g. the Canary Islands), only later did it undergo a wholesale transplant onto the Caribbean. Mintz’s global history of a periphery, therefore, can be viewed as an important counter-narrative to Wallerstein’s and Arrighi’s history of the capitalist core.¹⁰ Both Wolf and Mintz paved the way for a more geographically-sophisticated genealogy of industrial capitalism. The vast body of research on the “Atlantic history” that has been published in the last three decades,¹¹ and that Baucom’s work undoubtedly belongs to, fully extended the agency responsible for the birth of capitalism from England (or even Lancashire) to the entire Atlantic space-of-flows. This is how the various “peripheral” actors from whom history had hitherto been “stolen,” to use Jack Goody’s phrase, became fully-fledged subjects in global history.¹²

My aim in the remaining chapters of Part One is to provide a Mintzian counter-narrative to Arrighi’s model of the capitalist totality, and describe the central role occupied by class in the forging of both spatial and temporal uneven development. While Industrial Revolution was experienced by its contemporaries as an abrupt break with the “Merry Old England,” in fact, as Sennett brilliantly showed, it was largely erected upon the extant social structures of the *ancien régime*. This continuity was more social than material – the built environment of industrial cities, as my analysis of Victorian Manchester demonstrated, was entirely novel and hence shocking. Likewise, the emergence of Poland’s Manchester in the latter part of the nineteenth century, while being a radical break with largely agricultural material landscape, was actually a continuation of social, or rather class, structures of the *ancien régime*. Before I turn in Chapter Three to the analysis of Łódź’s genesis, I have to therefore describe the class origins of Polish entanglement in the world economy. This is particularly important because the persistence of the *ancien régime* did not stop at the industrial epoch; as I will argue in Parts Two and Three of this study, the very same class structures returned in a different material guise during the post-1945 urbanization of Poland. The three different material permutations – feudal, industrial and urban – of a single class structure is essentially the story I wish to tell in this study.

¹⁰ Sidney Wilfred Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), Sidney Mintz, “The so-called world system: Local initiative and local response,” *Dialectical Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (1977): 253-270.

¹¹ Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005).

¹² Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

The Piast and the Jagiellon concepts

The central difficulty in speaking about the Polish *ancien régime* is that it, as the geographer Andrzej Piskozub argued, comprises two conflicting “spatial heritages.” The “Piast Poland,” he insisted, was (and still is) opposed to the “Jagiellon Poland.”¹³ The two terms are derived from the names of royal dynasties that ruled Poland from circa 960 to 1370, and from 1387 to 1572 respectively. If we think, following Wolf, about class as a “bundle of relations,” then in the Polish case this bundle needs to be sundered in two. In this chapter I will argue that the Piast-Jagiellon distinction represents the conflicting social legacies of the Polish experience of the Italian and Dutch hegemonies. Just as during the Italian hegemony Poland was “drawn into” the world system (and the realm of Latin culture), during the Dutch ascent to world power the Polish social structure was fundamentally refashioned working in the interest of the Dutch merchant capitalism. It was during the initial stage of the Dutch hegemony that the “second serfdom” (system of intensive cash-crops production based upon unpaid and coerced labor) was introduced in Poland. The term “second serfdom” is wholly inadequate, however, because there was never a “first serfdom” in Poland.¹⁴ Instead, the period that preceded it (and that constitutes the historical basis for the “Piast legacy”) was one of general economic prosperity and of porous and relatively egalitarian social structure. This is why, instead of “refeudalisation,” I suggest speaking of Polish “merchant feudalism,” to emphasize both its links to Dutch merchant capitalism and its fundamental nonsynchronicity.¹⁵

The actual historical epochs that can be dubbed “Piast” and “Jagiellon” hardly correspond to the timelines of the dynastic rule. I suggest understanding the Piast epoch (1300-1500) and the Jagiellon epoch (1500-1800) as marked by the consecutive supremacy of first Krakow and then Warsaw in the Polish urban system. The fact that Poland’s Manchester, therefore, was built in Łódź, i.e. the vicinity of (and in close relation to) Warsaw, and the fact that the textile industry in Andrychów, i.e. the area surrounding Krakow, collapsed entirely in the very same period is a portend of the fundamentally Jagiellon (social and class) nature of Poland’s industrialization. Moreover, the fact that its uneasy relation to Warsaw remains still to this very day Łódź’s main predicament (as will become evident in Part Three), suggests the fundamentally Jagiellon nature of Łódź’s “relative location”¹⁶ and more generally of Poland’s contemporary spatial system. A periodization similar to mine has recently been suggested by Andrzej Janeczek, and

¹³ Andrzej Piskozub, *Dziedzictwo Polskiej Przestrzeni: Geograficzno-Historyczne Podstawy Struktur Przestrzennych Ziemi Polskich* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1987), 8, 20-23, 37-38, 65-66, 104-106. See also: Waclaw Bartczak, “O niepożytkach z jagiellonizmu” [On the plight of Jagiellonism] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (4-5 April 2009).

¹⁴ Jacek Kochanowicz, “The Polish Economy and the Evolution of Dependency,” in *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages Until the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Daniel Chirot (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 107.

¹⁵ I am thankful to Don Kalb for coining that term (personal communication, 3 November 2009).

¹⁶ Smith, *Uneven Development*, 82.

was also adopted by Francis Carter in his economic history of Krakow.¹⁷ For Arrighi each new hegemony selectively incorporated the previous ones; likewise, the Jagiellon epoch stands as much in opposition to as it encapsulates the Piast one. Between 1300 and 1500, Janeczek argued, Poland's political and economic position in Europe crystallized; moreover, it witnessed a fundamental "reorganization of land ownership and the development of the manorial [grain-producing] economy," political and legal germination of the future ruling class, the *szlachta*, as well as the establishment of the "patterns of urban development that remained in place until the nineteenth century."¹⁸ The two epochs do, nonetheless, constitute separate entities.

One may think of that difference in the following way: the Piast era was a period of intense class struggle (and mobility), whereas the Jagiellon epoch was a period of class formation. Such an order of things is not a uniquely Polish phenomenon. As E.P. Thompson once put it, "classes do not exist as separate entities, look around, find an enemy class, and then start to struggle."¹⁹ Instead, classes as distinct cultural formations emerge from a rather complex and highly conflictual process, wherein the issue of social mobility is of key importance. The English working class, for example, as Eric Hobsbawm argued, was fully *made* (i.e. formed as communities distinct in their *Lebenswelt*) only between 1870 and 1914 – at the peak of the "age of reconstruction." The process described by E.P. Thompson in his classic book (which terminates its narrative in the 1830s), therefore refers to the moment of class struggles and political contention rather than class formation in the strict sense.²⁰ The temporal gap between class struggle and class formation, however, points to the priority of the former; and it is in that sense that we may speak of the seeds of the Jagiellon epoch having been planted in the Piast era.

Likewise, the power shift from Krakow to Warsaw was a "long-drawn-out process."²¹ Not until the fourteenth century can we speak of Krakow as a *de facto* capital— before that it was not more than a tribal center of the region of the "Lesser Poland;" in the course of struggles for state unification, the "capital" often shifted between Krakow and Gniezno (the metropolitan see), Poznań and Płock – cities of "Greater Poland."²² Krakow was essentially a trading node, favorably positioned at the crossroads of two major trading routes, one from south to north, and the other

¹⁷ Andrzej Janeczek, "Town and country in the Polish Commonwealth, 1350-1650," in *Town and Country in Europe, 1300-1800*, ed. S. R Epstein, 5 (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 159, Francis W Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland: An Economic Geography of Cracow, from Its Origins to 1795* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ E. P. Thompson, "Class and Class Struggle," in *Class*, ed. Patrick Joyce, Oxford readers (Oxford: Oxford University, 1995), 136.

²⁰ Ira Katznelson, "Working-class formation: constructing cases and comparisons," in *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Aristide R Zolberg (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986), 3 See also: Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*.

²¹ Francis W Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland: An Economic Geography of Cracow, from Its Origins to 1795*, Cambridge studies in historical geography 20 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 186-187.

²² *Ibid.*, 64-65.

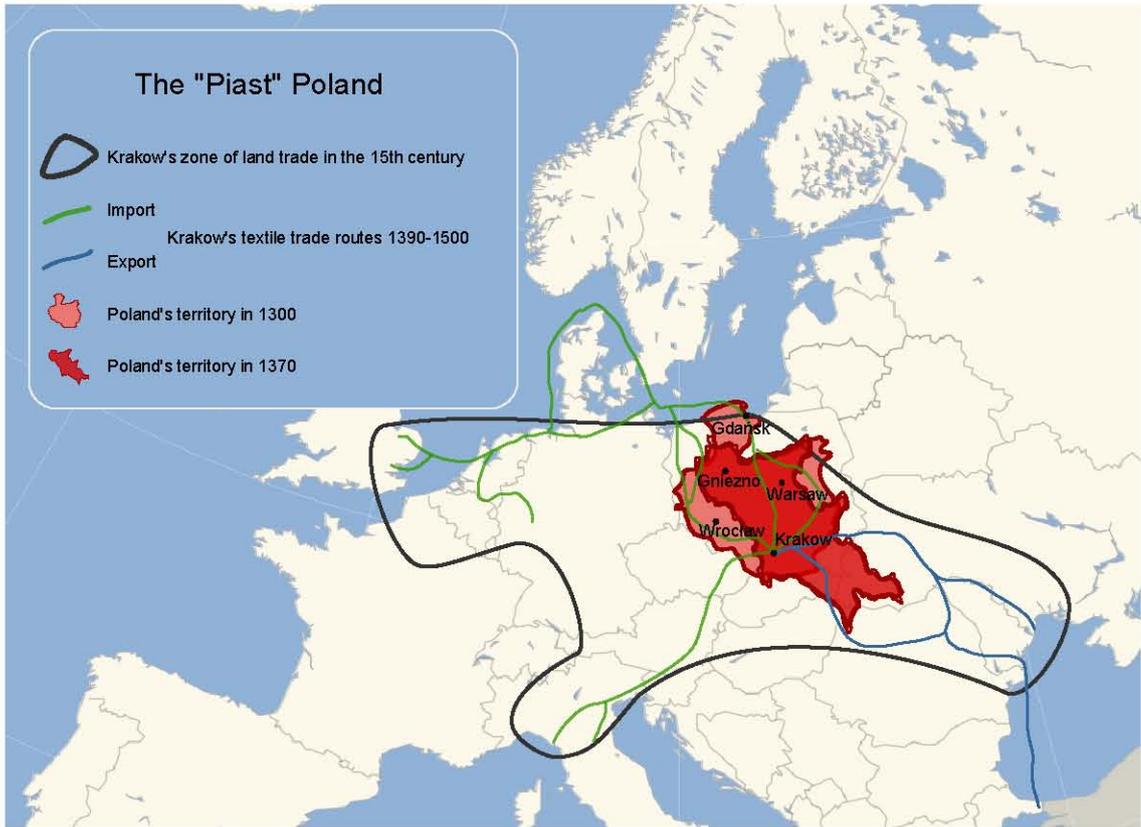


Plate two Poland's two spatial legacies

Sources: Andrzej Piskozub, *Dziedzictwo przestrzenne Polski*
Francis Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland*,
p. 156, 343, 349

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from east to west.²³ It received the municipal charter in 1257, and soon struggles between various Piast dukes to unify the Polish territories became synonymous with the struggles to control Krakow – “which had [by 1300] become Poland’s symbol of natural unity.”²⁴ When in 1320, after decades of interregnum, a king was crowned in Krakow’s cathedral, this was interpreted as a symbolic rebirth of united Poland. That, together with the legacy of the 1241 Tartar raid, had a crucial “psychological impact” on Krakow’s place in Poland’s symbolic geography. In the Piast ideology, Krakow stands as the perennial seat of Polishness, “the defensive capital and bastion of Western freedom from the nearby frontier of danger.”²⁵ The bugle-call that allegedly warned Krakow citizens about the Tartar menace back then is to this very day played every noon from Krakow’s Old Market Square.

Historians disagree as to when it was precisely that Poland’s capital moved to Warsaw. In theory, Krakow remained the capital city well into the eighteenth century; since 1609 Warsaw served as the King’s residence. The very last coronation ceremony was held in Krakow as late as in 1734. The growing importance of Warsaw was mainly a consequence of Poland’s union with Lithuania. When the first Jagiellon ruler was invited from Lithuania to take the Polish throne, a personal union of the two countries was proclaimed. The process of the integration was gradual, and the union was made permanent only in 1569, a little more than a decade before the death of the last Jagiellon ruler. Between 1573 and 1795 Polish monarchs were being elected by the general assembly of the gentry. The unique political system of the Commonwealth of Both Nations was called a “noble’s democracy.” Poland-Lithuania was the largest state in Latin-Christian Europe at the time, with a territory of nearly a million square meters, stretched at its heyday from the Baltic to the Black Sea and from the Carpathian Mountains literally to the outskirts of Moscow.²⁶

Krakow’s erstwhile role as both a political and an economic center was gradually taken over by Warsaw and Gdańsk respectively. Warsaw became simply more central than Krakow in the new polity, and served mainly as the key node in the country’s political network. Gdańsk, on the other hand, was an important emporium located at the mouth of the Vistula River, where the Polish producers sold their grain to their Dutch business partners. Krakow, whose prosperity lasted for nearly the entire Piast epoch, while declining economically and politically, retained its key symbolic function. The ensuing “merchant feudalism” was more short-lived than the Piast economy. Serfdom was introduced in law between 1518 and 1520. The peak in grain trade in Gdańsk came in 1618. The “golden age” of the Polish *ancien régime* therefore, occurred sometime in the transitional moment between the Piast and the Jagiellon systems, and was closely associated with the very beginning of the Dutch hegemony. After gaining the upper hand in the world economy by

²³ Ibid., 55.

²⁴ Ibid., 61.

²⁵ Ibid., 12, 65.

²⁶ Satoshi Koyama, “The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a Political Space: Its Unity and Complexity,” *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 15 (2008): 137

monopolizing the Baltic space-of-flows, the Dutch withdrew their assets and turned to other economic pursuits. For Poland, the social consequence of that relatively brief encounter, however, proved extraordinarily enduring, and, as I will argue below and in the next two chapters, the Jagiellon legacy died hard in the course of the “revolutionary” World War Two and its aftermath.

Historical versus natural landscapes

Arrighi argued that the transition from one cycle of accumulation to another “generates a pendulum-like movement back and forth between ‘cosmopolitan-imperial’ and ‘corporate-national’ organizational structures.” Extensive regimes, such as the Iberian/Genoese and the British, were cosmopolitan-imperial, in the sense that they “have been responsible for the geographical expansion of the world economy,” whereas intensive regimes such as the Dutch and the American were corporate-national, in the sense that “they have been responsible for geographical consolidation” of world’s territories.²⁷ It was the extensive Italian hegemony, through the cultural influence of the Renaissance, that dragged a formerly “barbaric” country into the orbit of capitalism. It was, as I will argue presently, an all-European process, in which the nobility with dwindling incomes sought new ways of keeping up their incomes *vis-à-vis* the new merchant capitalists. While in many European states (Britain included) the answer to that novel challenges lay in agriculture, the “land revolution” of the sixteenth century produced different social systems, and different classes, in various European states. In Poland, the Italian “demonstration effect” locked various social groups in competition for incomes, and well into the sixteenth century, all estates – the gentry, the peasantry and burgers – were actually doing equally well. This is why the Piast epoch is remembered as one of general economic prosperity. This was so especially for the peasantry, that well into the sixteenth century was often more resourceful and prosperous than the gentry. Gradually, however, through the Jagiellon epoch, the peasantry was dispossessed, and turned into a class of serfs, fundamentally (i.e. racially) distinguished from the gentry.

The ascent of Poland’s future ruling class was gradual. The Dutch “intensive” method of expansion allowed for a future consolidation of the Polish-Lithuanian territories, or to be more precise of “internal colonialism,” i.e. a gradual eastward conquest territories of the Lithuanian Duchy (today’s Lithuania, Belarus and parts of the Ukraine) by the Polish-speaking gentry.²⁸ This “internal colonialism” was a response to the declining profitability of the grain trade, and was based, as I will describe in Chapter Three, on a strategy of “accumulation by addiction.” This class formation process was, therefore, mainly consumption- rather than production-driven, as it produced a vicious circle of economic decline. Because the Dutch hegemony was disinterested in territorial conquest, Poland-Lithuania lingered on the

²⁷ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 219.

²⁸ Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); for a recent reappraisal, see: Michal Buchowski, “The Specter of Orientalism in Europe: From Exotic Other to Stigmatized Brother,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (2006): 463-482.

European map with its increasingly obsolete economy; it drifted towards economic autarky and cultural as well as social idiosyncrasy, and was sustained by the class-based intensive strategies. While all other European nations, pushed by the Dutch “demonstration effect” into the building of bellicose empires, stepped up their arsenal of the “means of coercion,” in the 1760s, Poland-Lithuania’s army numbered 16,000 men, while the adjacent Russia, Prussia and Austria stood with armies of 200,000 to 500,000 soldiers.²⁹ By 1800, they swiftly divided Poland-Lithuania among themselves. This was, as the reader may recall, the time of the Zong massacre, and the transitional moment from an “intensive” Dutch to an “extensive” British hegemony.

It does not seem accidental that Poland-Lithuania existed precisely as long as the Dutch controlled the reins of the world economy, and that there was no room for such a polity during the extensive British hegemony. When the latter was drawing to its close, the issue of the possible reemergence of the Polish state was back on the table. The debate on the Polish nation and the state continued through much of the nineteenth century, and by the *fin de siècle* the two camps, the Piast and the Jagiellon, had already crystallized. This soon became the key political division in Poland, symbolized by the two major architects of the restored Polish statehood – Roman Dmowski (1864-1939) and Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935). The Piast and the Jagiellon concepts were essentially two versions of nationalism and statism (both operate on the same geographical scale). The Jagiellon concept emerged slightly earlier, during the age of Romanticism, and sustained that Poland should reemerge on the world map within its old Polish-Lithuanian borders.

Its tenants were best captured in the literary figure of Wernyhora – a mythical eighteenth century bard-errand enshrined by a vast array of poets, novelists and painters – who predicated Poland-Lithuania’s debacle but also envisioned its eventual rebirth. “Let us love one another,” appealed Warnybora (a Ukrainian Cossack of the Orthodox faith and not a Catholic Pole), “for we are all children of the same Mother.”³⁰ The Jagiellon concept harked back to the multicultural heritage of Poland-Lithuania; Poland was conceived as a “multinational nation,” a “Mother of many nationalities.” The Jagiellon concept defined “nation” more in the British and American way, and took the *szlachta* as the core ancestor of the Polish political nation. In Piłsudski’s view, “the nation was a product of history, a community sharing the same values and loyalties, though not necessarily the same ethnicity or origins.”³¹ Cultural diversity was seen as the source of a nation’s vitality rather than a possible treat. The Jagiellon concept, however, bracketed entirely the massive class violence that accompanied the project of “internal colonialism” – the violence that did not vanish, but actually accelerated after Poland-Lithuania lost its

²⁹ Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, 139.

³⁰ Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland*, Oxford paperbacks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 195.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

independence (as recently described by Daniel Beauvois).³² Precisely for that reason, while the Jagiellon concept was espoused by many ethnic Poles (and especially *déclassé* nobles), the Lithuanian, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Jewish “minorities” were significantly more reserved in embracing it.

While Dmowski’s major political success was his two-year long service as Poland’s Chief Delegate to the Paris Peace Conference, and the geographical shape of the interwar Poland (1918-1939) was essentially his achievement, it was Piłsudski who was made Poland’s Chief of State in 1918, and who became the symbolic “father figure” of the Polish Second Republic. The American delegation to the Paris Conference was favorably disposed towards Polish demands. These fitted perfectly into the Woolsonian blueprint for global order based upon sovereign nation-states. His geographer, and the head of the American delegation in Paris, Isaac Bowman, noted: “when Dmowski related the claims of Poland, he began at eleven o’clock in the morning and in the fourteenth century, and could reach the year 1919 and the pressing problems of the moment only as late as four o’clock in the afternoon.”³³ The Piast arguments championed by Dmowski were essentially anti-German, and he laid claims on territories that had not been Polish for many centuries, including Lower and Upper Silesia as well as Prussia. The American delegation shared some of that anti-German sentiments, but it was Piłsudski’s 1920 victory in the war against the Bolsheviks (as well as his military capture of Vilnius in 1921) that turned the tables in his favor.

The Second Republic Poland emerged therefore as a “buffer zone” between Germany and the Soviet Union, and a compromise between the anti-German Piast and the anti-Russian Jagiellon tendencies. Because Imperial Russia was Poland-Lithuania’s main competitor (in Russian historiography the 1610-1612 Polish occupation of Moscow is referred to as “the times of trouble”), and later its chief and most hated occupier, the Jagiellon concept (as well as Piłsudski himself) was fundamentally Russophobic. Although the Second Republic Poland resembled much closer the Jagiellon rather than the Piast ideal, it did not satisfy Piłsudski’s ambitions. The partition of Ukraine and Belarus between Poland and the Soviet Union in 1921 squandered his plans for establishing a large multiethnic federation, although clandestine yet ambitious efforts at “liberating” the Soviet-annexed Ukraine were made by Polish diplomats throughout the entire interwar period.³⁴ Nor Dmowski’s ideal for a “Greater Poland” realized after 1918. The reborn Poland was indeed vast, but over one-third of its population was ethnically “alien,” and hence did not conform to Dmowski’s ethnic and racial understanding of the “nation.” Worse still, important components of the Piast territories (such as Gdańsk) remained still outside of Polish control.

³² Daniel Beauvois, *Trójkąt Ukraiński: Szlachta, Carat I Lud Na Wołyniu, Podolu I Kijowszczyźnie 1793-1914* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005).

³³ Smith, *American Empire Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*, 150.

³⁴ Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission To Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

Just as the Jagiellon concept had a historical “origin,” the Piast concept was a typical product of the late nineteenth century social Darwinism. Trained in biology, Dmowski championed an essentialist vision of the nation, constituting “a race, a biological kinship group possessing its own ‘blood’ and its own genetic ‘stock’, and having a corporate existence and identity far superior to those of its individual members.”³⁵ It harked back to times immemorial, when the Piast dynasty (allegedly derived from the peasantry) peacefully ruled a fairly egalitarian and ethnically homogenous society. That the Piast epoch was hardly peaceful was a different matter altogether. The arch enemy of the Piast ideologues was Germany, or rather the Teutonic order, that arrived in Poland in 1226, and soon colonized the Baltic coast, including Gdańsk – Krakow’s major economic competitor. It is all the more ironic that the ideal polity Dmowski had in mind closely resembled “that powerful, prosperous, ethnically cohesive, and reunited imperial Germany which, consciously, he so much feared and hated.”³⁶ While an anti-Semite and a Germanophobe, Dmowski was also a Latinophile, and was sympathetic towards both Italy and Czechoslovakia. Piłsudski’s anti-Russian sentiments, on the other hand, were extended to Czechoslovakia, and he would have probably commended Poland’s 1938 annexation of its parts in cahoots with the Nazi Germany.³⁷

The Piast concept, therefore, appeared both in the opposition to the nineteenth century industrial urbanization, symbolized by German economic successes and Jewish assimilation during the “era of reconstruction,” as well as in the opposition to the hegemony of the Jagiellon concept within Poland. This difference is well visible in the biographies of the two figures: while Piłsudski was born into a déclassé gentry family from the Vilnius region, and essentially remained a “man of the [Ukrainian/Belarusian/Lithuanian] frontier” (*kresowiec*) for all his life, Dmowski was an urbanite, growing up in a poor Warsaw suburb; his origins “were those of the new assertive Polish bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth century, whose ambitions were frustrated by the closed nature of the imperial regimes of the partitioning powers and by competition with the numerous non-Polish elements of urban society.”³⁸ But likewise the Jagiellon “idyll” was a reaction to the discontents wrought by the nineteenth century industrialization. While in the former part of the century, the Polish nobles were actively engaged in the new business activities, as a result of the failed national uprising in 1864 Polish nobles increasingly withdrew to the “save” rural habitat. “Let other nations be industrious and wealthy,” wrote an author of popular historical novels, “and let us remain golden-hearted (*poczciwi*).”³⁹ The Jagiellon idea was most compellingly popularized by Henryk Sienkiewicz – a Nobel Prize winning author of historical novels – in three books written in the

³⁵ Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 120.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.

³⁷ Anna Cienciala, “The Munich Crisis of 1938: Plans and Strategy in Warsaw in the Context of the Western Appeasement of Germany,” in *The Munich Crisis, 1938: Prelude to World War II*, ed. Igor Lukes and Erik Goldstein (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 50-59.

³⁸ Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 116.

³⁹ Ignacy Kraszewski in: Witold Kula and Janina Leskiewiczowa, eds., *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim 1815-1864 [Social Transformations in the Kingdom of Poland, 1815-1864]* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1979), 387.

1880s, and referred to in the Polish culture as the *Trilogy*. They were written in order to, as Sienkiewicz insisted, “cheer the hearts” of the troubled and increasingly marginalized populace.⁴⁰

When Dmowski’s ideas were in their inception, the Jagiellon concept was “all the rage,” and Sienkiewicz regarded as a national hero. As Witold Gombrowicz (one of the very few Polish intellectuals who successfully escaped the Piast versus Jagiellon dichotomy), wrote: “it is difficult to find a comparable example of the captivation of an entire nation, or of a more mesmerizing hold on the imagination of the masses in the history of literature.” While reading the *Trilogy*, he noted down: “distressing reading. We say: this is pretty bad, and we read on. We say: what flimsy stuff, yet we can’t tear ourselves away. We shout: insufferable opera, and we read on, mesmerized. There has probably never been such a first-rate second-rate author” as Sienkiewicz. The key to his success was his “easy beauty,” the way in which in “his world even physical pain becomes a piece of candy.” In his novels on the adventures of Polish nobles during the heyday of their democracy (including the occupation of Moscow) Sienkiewicz “peppered virtue with sin ... coated sin with sugar and was able to concoct a sweetish liqueur, but too strong but exciting.” Such prepared aesthetic “became the ideal set of pajamas for all of those who did not want to gape at their own hideous nakedness.” The increasingly pauperized and marginalized gentry, gradually amalgamating into the intelligentsia, “in their majority, a desperate band of slovenly dolts, finally found its ideal style and, what goes with it, attained complete satisfaction with itself.” The Jagiellon idyll comforted “every single element which wanted to ridicule its way out of confrontations that were too difficult;” captivated by the *Trilogy*, “Polish patriotism, so lazy and brisk in its beginnings and bloody and enormous in its effects, got drunk on Sienkiewicz’s Poland until it passed out.”⁴¹

The nature-history distinction, that I opened this chapter with, is not as sharp as it may have seemed at first glance. Indeed, Dmowski’s Piast ideology was deeply anchored in nature, as in the German *Blut und Boden* school. His nation was derived from the union of blood and soil. Sienkiewicz’s edifying vision of the vastness of Poland-Lithuania, and especially the sublimity of the Ukrainian steppe, however, were likewise very contemporary. Sienkiewicz actually never set foot in the territories he so deftly and grippingly described in the *Trilogy*. Instead, he spent “two happy and exciting years in the United States, travelling down the great rivers and across the continent in the time of wagon trains, stage coaches and Indian campaigns, hunting, fishing, and camping in the Sierras, and absorbing both the beauty and the dangers of the vast open spaces at their unspoiled best.” As a result, “his narrative descriptions of the Ukrainian Steppe glow with remembered American imagery.” He transposed “his vision of the prairies, the endless landscapes, and the sea of grass ‘where a man might ride unseen, for days, like a

⁴⁰ Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Fire in the Steppe*, 1st ed. (Fort Washington, Pa.: Copernicus Society of America, 1992); Henryk Sienkiewicz, *The Deluge*, 1st ed. (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1991); Henryk Sienkiewicz, *With Fire and Sword* (New York: Copernicus Society of America, 1991).

⁴¹ Witold Gombrowicz, *Diary* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 223-230.

diver drifting through an ocean' onto the rich and turbulent canvas of his imagined Ukrainian Steppe."⁴² The idea of the Polish-Lithuanian frontier (*kresy*), the very homeland of the Jagiellon concept, is a direct import from the United States; the soothing, comforting, and "golden-hearted" imagery in Sienkiewicz's historical novels are derived directly from the poetics of the American landscape.⁴³ Had Sienkiewicz visited the Ukraine and Belarus of the late nineteenth century—impoverished and rent by class violence—his vision of history would have never been so pastoral. But by the same token, it would never succeed in "uplifting" the Polish hearts.

The Polish anarchy

The Great and the Little traditions

Because the Piast concept is largely a response to both symbolic and social hegemony of the Jagiellon legacy, I suggest thinking of their relation in terms of the difference between the "Little" and "Great" traditions – notions once developed by the anthropologist Robert Redfield, and recently interpreted by Jack Goody as a dialectic between class forces.⁴⁴ In Poland the grassroots resistance to class, and the Jagiellon space that underpins it, tends to be expressed in the language (and the politics) of the Piast legacy. As I will discuss in Chapter Three, this was precisely what happened during the 1905 revolution in Łódź. Because Piłsudski and his Polish Socialist Party consciously sidestepped "economic" demands and in the forefront of their struggle placed the project of a national insurrection leading to the reemergence of the Polish state, in 1905 the working-class militancy and what Laura Crago described as "production-based nationalism" drifted towards the Piast agenda, and led towards "a uniquely Polish phenomena – a nationalist working-class party," closely associated with Dmowski's National Democratic Party.⁴⁵ This was also precisely what happened during the anti-Semitic working-class upsurge in March 1968, as I will describe in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

Both the political and geographical situation in post-war Poland was radically new; consequently, the balance of power between the Jagiellon and Piast heritages shifted. It is difficult to tell if Dmowski would have been amused or horrified if he had lived long enough to discover that what one of his most eminent dreams was made come true by Comrade Stalin. Following the Yalta Conference in 1945, Poland was significantly "moved" westwards, and now included the core "Piast territories," such as Lower and Upper Silesia, and the Baltic coast. This constituted

⁴² Jerzy Ryszard Krzyzanowski, "Introduction," in *With Fire and Sword* (New York: Copernicus society of America, 1991), xii-xiii.

⁴³ see: Stanisław Eile, *Literature and Nationalism in Partitioned Poland, 1795-1918*, Studies in Russia and East Europe (New York: St. Martin's Press, in association with School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 2000), 111-125.

⁴⁴ Jack Goody, "The Great and the Little Traditions in the Mediterranean," in *Food and Love: A Cultural History of East and West* (London: Verso, 1998), 185-202.

⁴⁵ Laura A. Crago, "The "Polishness" of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland's Textile Industry, 1880-1910," *Slavic Review* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 16-41.

an unprecedented historical opportunity for the Piast ideologues; Gdańsk was no longer in “foreign” hands, nor was it on Poland’s frontier. It was safe, a few hundred kilometers away from the nearest Germans. Cities such as Breslau (now Wrocław) “returned” to Poland after over six centuries of being “away from the fatherland.” Adoption of the name of “People’s Republic of Poland” and the crownless (Piast) eagle for its coat-of-arms were a clear signal that now the Piast concept was to become dominant.⁴⁶ The politics of purification during World War Two and the period immediately following it, turned Poland, for the first time ever, into an ethnically homogenous nation-state. Chapter Four will be devoted precisely to that.

Commemoration of the millennium of Polish statehood (960s to 1960s) became the perfect opportunity for propagating the Piast ideology; the latter marked much of the local color of the long 1960s. “I remember,” a historian born in 1963 recalled, “that posters of Chancellor Adenauer attired like a Teutonic Knight were displayed in my primary school.” History textbooks were peppered with statements like that caption: “a German merchant arrives at Slavic settlement and noses about. He stares sinisterly and has a ginger beard.”⁴⁷ Convincing West Germany to recognize officially Poland’s Western border became the sheer “obsession” of Poland’s Communist leader. Gomułka confessed to his younger colleague: “was our Western border confirmed in Potsdam? No. Stalin wanted to leave a string he could pull at will. Foreign powers sold us back and forth for over two centuries. Poland remains to be a very popular merchandise.”⁴⁸ Thanks to his diplomatic efforts the border treaty between Poland and (West) Germany was signed, to his relief, in 1970; but it was ratified only in 1992. The “Teutonic threat” was looming over the People’s Poland for the entire socialist period.

It was the fear of being an object of imperialist power games that, among other things, accelerated the anti-Semitic purges in March 1968. This was the time when two Party fractions, one loyal to the Piast and the other to the Jagiellon legacy, clashed. Although the Piast camp emerged victorious, their success was short-lived. The year 1968, as it has been recently argued, constitutes a real watershed for the Polish intelligentsia. Ever since, the Jagiellon concept has been on the rise, and it was espoused by anti-Communist dissidents in the 1970s and the 1980s. The Solidarity movement, Tomasz Zarycki argued, mobilized the Jagiellon heritage of noble republicanism; Polish dissidents became “knights of the word” who found it easy to constitute a coherent symbolic realm fully external to the “dominant ideology.” This was impossible for their East German counterparts, for example, who had only a bourgeois legacy to build upon, and who “did not create an inverse hierarchy of social status” but instead “remained fixed on the official criteria of

⁴⁶ Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 287.

⁴⁷ Dariusz Matelski, “Antyniemiecka obsesja Gomułki” [Gomułka’s anti-German obsession] (interview by Ewa Milewicz), *Gazeta Wyborcza* (14 June 2005).

⁴⁸ Gomułka in: Mieczysław F. Rakowski, “Historia wkracza na Krakowskie,” [Historical moments in politics] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (7 November 2008).

success (higher education, professional career, good housing).⁴⁹ The Piast-dominated Communist regime left “eastern territories of the early modern Commonwealth to Soviet history. The political antidotes to communism exploited this error,” argued Timothy Snyder. The neo-Jagiellon and anti-communist ideology was “not directed toward returning the Commonwealth to Polish history, but rather toward creating parallel national readings of the history of Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine on the Polish model.” As a result, “a historically dubious if politically generous multi-nationalism, recognizing the existence and legitimacy of other modern nations” was created and became a powerful anti-Soviet argument hinging upon “the general belief about the historical inevitability of the Polish nation-state into a presumption in favor of neighboring nations becoming states.”⁵⁰ The military regime that ran Poland in the 1980s made the Jagiellon revival even easier, because the increasingly entrenched Communist ideology clung to the Piast symbolism ever more desperately. Just as before 1981 our two heroes were diplomatically not discussed, the Dmowski versus Piłsudski debate returned with vengeance, in both samizdat and the official media.

As will become evident in Part Two and especially Part Three of this study, the long 1960s was primarily the period of a major clash between the Jagiellon and Piast heritages, and the spatial structures sustaining it; March 1968 constituted the very climax of that struggle. The Łódź-Warsaw animosity, that I will return to at various moments of this study, has to be placed in that very context. To be sure, Łódź belonged neither to the Piast nor to the Jagiellon space. As I will show in Chapter Three, if anything, it was an “unwanted child” of the Jagiellon social relations. Had the Jagiellon ideology been genuinely cosmopolitan and multi-cultural, then Łódź—an urban melting pot for Poles, Germans, and Jews—would have been embraced by, rather than expelled from, the Jagiellon heritage.⁵¹ It was not. As I have already suggested, the secret of the mesmerizing capacity of the Jagiellon nationalism lurked in it effectively bracketing the issue of class. To be sure, there is violence, atrocity and sin in Sienkiewicz’s novels. But the Polish sin “comes from an excess of vital forces and a pure heart,” reminded Gombrowicz. Polish sinners are always “golden-hearted,” and they are always willing to give their foes a conciliatory hug. Sienkiewicz, “the peddler of pleasant dreams ... realized this liberation of sin, which had long been necessary for Polish development.”⁵² The Jagiellon fantasy of an intimate and closely-knit community, projected onto the past and fixed at the national scale, effectively disavowed the violence of the past and the tragedy of the present. As I will show in the following chapter, Łódź was built upon Jagiellon class relations. Yet, in what is regarded as the greatest Polish novel on both Łódź and the late nineteenth century industrialization, the *Promised Land* by Władysław

⁴⁹ Tomasz Zarycki, “The power of the intelligentsia: The Rywin Affair and the challenge of applying the concept of cultural capital to analyze Poland’s elites,” *Theory and Society* 38, no. 6 (November 1, 2009): 621-626.

⁵⁰ Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2003), 251, see also: 220-231.

⁵¹ See also: Wojciech Górecki, *Łódź Przechyla Katharsis* (Łódź: Fundacja Anima "Tygiel Kultury", 1998), 23.

⁵² Gombrowicz, *Diary*, 227.

Reymont, the main protagonist is a squire. Actually, “all the bourgeois characters in Polish literature [of the time] were in fact nobles.”⁵³ Such an eviction from both history and the present, not unlike the disavowing of Manchester described in Chapter One, represented the cunning of class par excellence.

During the long 1960s Łódź, by emulating Warsaw or Krakow, sought to reinsert itself into Poland’s historical space, but, as the reader will discover in Part Three, to no avail. My claim is that Łódź’s current predicaments, and the very tragic downhill journey it went through in the last three decades, should be attributed to its “relative location” in Poland’s two conflicting spatial heritages, rather than to its spatial form as a place. Ironically, when during the 1990s and the 2000s Krakow was refashioning itself from a “Piaśt bulwark” into a multicultural city attractive to both foreign capital and tourists (Wrocław followed suit), Łódź, almost identical in size, had less denizens employed in industry than Krakow.⁵⁴ In other words, if any of the two deserved to be called an “industrial city” during the post-socialist “transition,” it was Krakow, and not Łódź. Łódź’s utter isolation, and its accelerating marginalization in the Polish urban system, that will be described in greater detail in Chapter Nine, stemmed, in my view, not as much from it facing the trouble of deindustrialization (initially, i.e. during the long 1960s, this was relatively successful, as I will discuss in Chapters Five and Seven), but from its class genesis and its continued role of a repressed product of the Jagiellon social and spatial system. Łódź’s predicaments stem from the age of industrialization only in one sense: it was in the late nineteenth century that the Piaśt and Jagiellon visions of history and fantasies of community were forged. Both originated largely as a response to the social processes that brought Łódź about. Its continued lot as a city without history, a place overshadowed by fantasies of community on the national scale, is a powerful reminder of the extant consequences of the Industrial Revolution, as analyzed by Richard Sennett and described in the previous chapter.

The extremity of Europe

As Larry Wolff brilliantly demonstrated, the idea of “Eastern Europe” was born and codified in the Western imagination during the Enlightenment. This was the time when the north-south divide in Europe was replaced by the east-west dichotomy.⁵⁵ The new discursive protocol of speaking about Poland, he argued, developed back then was centered on stunning yet obscure paradoxes. Poland was, as the Prussian King Frederick told a French diplomat in 1784, a “curious country:” a “free land where the nation is enslaved, a republic with a king, a vast country almost without population.”⁵⁶ The Frenchman reported from Poland in exactly that vein: “everything is in contrast in this land... deserts and palaces, the slavery of the

⁵³ Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim*, 99.

⁵⁴ In 2007 Krakow had 67,852 people employed in industry and construction, whereas Łódź had 64,591. See: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Pracujący w gospodarce narodowej w 2007 r.* (Warsaw: GUS, 2008): 49, 60, 63.

⁵⁵ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1994).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

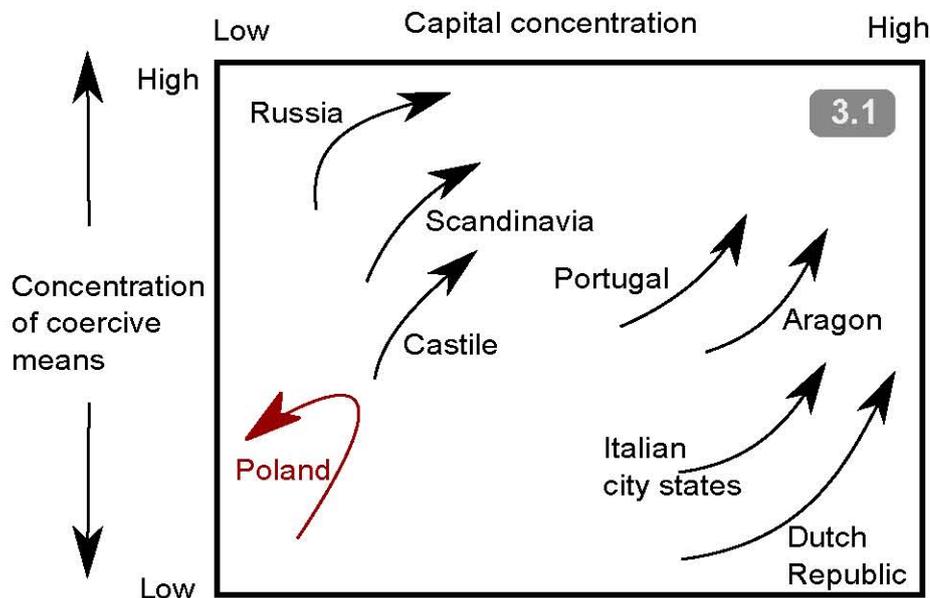


Plate three

Consequences of Poland's merchant feudalism

3.1 - Poland as the exception in the European history according to Charles Tilly

3.2 - Poland's position in Europe during the good grain conjuncture (an anonymous painting from the 17th century)

3.3 - Poland's position in Europe once the heyday of grain exports was over

Sources: Charles Tilly, *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990-1990*, Wikipedia.

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peasants and the turbulent liberty of the nobles". Poland seemed an "inconceivable *mélange* of ancient centuries and modern centuries," gentry's châteaux had "a great number of servants and horses but almost no furniture, Oriental luxury but no commodities of life." There was excess of grain but scarcity of money, and the gentry's "passion for war" contrasted to their "aversion to discipline." Upon entering Warsaw, "I remarked there more of those singular contrasts: magnificent mansions and mean houses, palaces and hovels." His lodging was "a sort of palace of which one half shined with noble elegance while the other was only a mass of debris and ruins, the sand remains of a fire." Further, "art, spirit, grace, literature, all the charm of social life, rivaling in Warsaw the sociability of Vienna, London, and Paris; but, in the provinces, manners still Sarmatian [barbaric]." Poland thus revealed itself as "the extremity of Europe."⁵⁷

Because during the Jagiellon epoch Poland-Lithuania was increasingly inward-looking, bogged down by its class-based project of internal colonization, the ways in which its uneven development was perpetuated has largely remained obscure to outside observers. This pertains not only to travel accounts, but also scholarship. As can be seen in Plate Three, for Charles Tilly, for example, Poland-Lithuania represented a spectacular aberration of the most fundamental trend in European history – gradual concentration of the means of coercion (by states) and capital (in cities). While other polities gradually converged into nation-states, which triumphed over other contingent political forms because by late nineteenth century they proved best in facilitating capitalist expansion, Poland-Lithuania "faced a decline in the concentrations of both [capital and coercion]."⁵⁸ This was precisely the explanation given by Wallerstein for the emergence of the "second serfdom" in Poland. "Why different modes of organizing labor – slavery, 'feudalism', wage labor, self-employment – at the same point in time within the world economy?" Wallerstein pondered. The answer was: "because each mode of labor control is best suited for particular types of production."⁵⁹ With the expanding world economy and incipient industrialization, some territories had to become the provider of "basic necessities" for others to industrialize. "Either eastern Europe would become the 'breadbasket' of western Europe or vice versa. ... The *slight* edge determined which of the two alternatives would prevail. At which point, the *slight* edge of the fifteenth century became the great disparity of the seventeenth century and the monumental difference of the nineteenth."⁶⁰ To explain how such a "slight edge" came about, Wallerstein moved from exogenous to endogenous arguments, and suggested that the "specific characteristics of eastern Europe," to wit, its relatively weak urban network and insufficient development of a centralized state, together with a gift of geography (vast territories ready for cereal cultivation) constituted Poland-

⁵⁷ Count Luis-Philippe de Segur quoted in: *Ibid.*, 19-21 In fact Daniel Defoe, writing in 1728, arrived at very similar conclusions, see Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, Rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 182-183.

⁵⁸ Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, 59-60.

⁵⁹ Wallerstein, *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, 87.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

Lithuania's fatal "advantage" in the sixteenth century and thus sealed its fate for centuries to come.⁶¹

Wallerstein's is, however, a circular argument. Feeble state and hamstrung cities—the hallmarks of underdevelopment and simply inverted traits of the "victorious" West—are to explain underdevelopment, to wit, themselves. Such an argument was even more explicitly postulated by Robert Brenner, whose class theory of the agricultural genesis of capitalism (in which Eastern European "refeudalisation" played an important role), triggered the so-called Brenner Debate in the 1970s. "The problem of backwardness in Eastern Europe," Brenner argued some years later, "is a question badly posed. Its unstated premise is the widely held view that economic development is more or less natural to society and that its failure to occur must therefore require reference to certain exogenous interfering factors."⁶² I suggest posing the question dodged by Brenner thus: if peripheries are merely the West's negative, and if the condition of peripherality is "simply a reflection of ... exploitation by the capitalist core, then why are [the peripheries] not more alike?"⁶³

What explains the enormous diversity of the capitalist totality, including the Polish-Lithuanian obscure destiny? Neither economic growth nor lack thereof is automatic. In hindsight we tend to forget that "winners" (in this case Western nation-states) often skew history in favor of the aggrandizement of their own pathways (i.e. the American hegemony); the overwhelming majority of polities in world history have been "non-national: empires, city-states, or something else."⁶⁴ Seen as a mere obverse of the Western path, Poland-Lithuania becomes precisely such a rudderless "something else." The inability to understand what principle (if it was neither coercion nor capital) actually "glued together" such a vast "something else," propelled to thinking of it as simply disorderly. To this very day in German, *Polnische Wirtschaft*, i.e. the Polish economy, is a synonym of utter chaos and irrationality. Not surprisingly, when the French published the first volume of *Encyclopédie*, its lengthily entry on "anarchy" was nearly exclusively devoted to Poland-Lithuania.⁶⁵

Anthropologists have long struggled to explain principles overriding societies that fail to conform to the institutional mould of West European nation-states. Max Gluckman and Evans-Prichard, for example, developed a notion of "ordered

⁶¹ Ibid., 97.

⁶² Brenner, Robert, "Economic Backwardness in Eastern Europe in Light of Developments in the West," in *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages Until the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Daniel Chirot (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 15.

⁶³ Richard G. Fox, "Urban Class and Communal Consciousness in Colonial Punjab: The Genesis of India's Intermediate Regime," *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 03 (1984): 459. See also Mintz, "The so-called world system."

⁶⁴ Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, 2.

⁶⁵ Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 659.

anarchy” to show how in African societies order was generated out of conflict.⁶⁶ Although this analogy ought not to be stretched too far, conflict was also the linchpin of Poland-Lithuania’s coherence. My point is that the inability to explain the “curiosity” of Poland-Lithuania stems from the inability to differentiate between the Piast and Jagiellon epochs. State power was on the rise in Poland until 1572, and likewise the Piast era was marked by substantial urban growth and prosperity. The key to understanding this dramatic reversal of trends lies in grasping the transition between the Piast and Jagiellon periods. And this “secret” is class. While in Chapter One I argued for an abstract, and nearly universal, understanding of class, in this and the following chapters, I describe the nonsynchronous, and local, facet of class. The abstract and the particular are, as I have already argued, interlocked in a dialectic, and this dialectic constitutes the very cunning of class. Therefore the “local” class categories that were inoculated in Poland during the period of “merchant feudalism” will remain critical for both nineteenth century industrialization and twentieth century urbanization, as the reader will soon discover. Although material landscapes melt into air, the class mechanism that underpins them remains surprisingly stable over many centuries.

In what remains an astonishingly perceptive analysis of the condition of dependency, Franz Fanon pointed to the key phenomenon that sustained underdevelopment over time despite the “frequent revisions” of economic relations noted by Braudel and without direct political control (the hallmark of the British hegemony). It was not enough to evict Western occupiers to terminate colonialism, he stressed, because a local elite would “fill in the vacancies” and reproduce the old regime. The key target of decolonization, he argued, ought to be the “local bourgeoisie” – the urban elite he describes as “acquisitive, voracious and ambitious petty caste, dominated by small-time racketeer mentality.” Its reproduction as a class hinged upon their tight isolation from the rural hinterland, and conspicuous consumption of Western luxury goods.⁶⁷ Therefore, although “the class struggle is never centrally discussed as such anywhere in Fanon’s writings” wrote Wallerstein recently, “it is central to his world-view and to his analyses.”

The key question, however, is “which are the classes that are struggling.” So far, however, “the discussion [on class] was dominated by the categories of the German Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.” Class struggle was seen as a conflict between the urban bourgeoisie and urban proletariat.⁶⁸ I have argued against such a production-based understanding of class in the previous chapter. For Fanon, the class divide in colonial societies runs between the Western-style metropolis and “tribal” hinterland, where the wretched of

⁶⁶ E. E Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 5, Max Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), chap. 1.

⁶⁷ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1st ed. (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 103-105, 119, 128-129.

⁶⁸ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, “Reading Fanon in the 21st Century,” *New Left Review*, no. 57 (2009): 124.

the Earth dwelled “transfixed, immobilized and terrorized,”⁶⁹ but whose only dream was to “reach the capital, and have [their] piece of pie.”⁷⁰ Although class was “discovered” in industrial cities, as I argued in the previous chapter, it can be effectively used to analyze pre-industrial phenomena – only because industrialization was a continuation of the social processes that preceded it. This was precisely what happened in Poland.

Class formation in Europe

Before we show how early-modern Polish-Lithuanian chaos was an outcome of class struggle, and that its class structure hinged upon what Fanon called the “factor of territoriality,”⁷¹ it needs to be stressed that the Piast to Jagiellon transition can only be understood as an integral element of an all-European phenomenon. The future east-west dichotomy in Europe was subservient, the Polish historian Jerzy Topolski argued, to a process of class formation that spanned the entire continent in the sixteenth century.⁷² Wallerstein actually recognized that, but for him this process was confined to England. The century bracketed by 1540 and 1640 was “a period of class *formation*, a capitalist agricultural class (whose wealthier members are called ‘gentry’ and whose lesser members are called ‘yeomen.’)” Also, it was “the beginnings of the creation of a proletariat, most of whom was still not firmly settled in the towns but rather were ‘vagabonds,’ seasonal wage workers with subsistence plots, and lumpenproletariat in the towns.”⁷³ England, however, was not the exception.

Yet, as Topolski insisted, the rise of Italian city states, and the increasing prosperity of burgers and merchants meant that “the Middle Ages were closing with a negative balance for the nobility” in the whole of Europe. What Arrighi called the first systemic cycle of accumulation (and the plunder of the Americas) undermined existing social structures, but also its “demonstration effect” pushed many noble groups, whose profits had shriveled, and who could no longer effectively reproduce themselves as a class, towards new economic activities, such as capitalist agriculture. Yet, “until the end of the fifteenth century all the efforts ... to arrest the dwindling of their incomes did not produce any visible results.”⁷⁴ Only throughout the long sixteenth century, Topolski argued, was the “new nobility” in Europe born from these efforts. In England it was called the “gentry,” in France *noblesse de robe*, in Spain *hidalgos* and *caballeros*, in Russia *dvoryanye*, and in Poland

⁶⁹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 119.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷² Jerzy Topolski, *Narodziny Kapitalizmu W Europie XIV-XVII Wieku [The birth of Capitalism in Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries]*, 2nd ed. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydaw. Naukowe, 1987), 102-106, Jerzy Topolski, “The Manorial-Serf Economy in Central and Eastern Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries,” *Agricultural History* 43, no. 3 (1974): 345-346, 349.

⁷³ Wallerstein, *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, 256.

⁷⁴ Topolski, “The Manorial-Serf Economy in Central and Eastern Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries,” 345.

szlachta. They were distinct from the medieval knighthood, and became fully conspicuous in the Age of Reformation.

Capitalism proper was confined to the hegemonic core – first Italian, then Dutch. Outside of it, quasi-capitalist regimes were being established by the new gentry emulating Italian and later Dutch burgers and merchants. “Over the whole of Europe,” as Henry Kamen described, in the early-modern era, “a significant part of the nobility was active in business, not excluding trade.”⁷⁵ At the same time, the early modern period was one of rapid social mobility, during which serious inroads were made into the privileged position held by the partly impoverished aristocracy.” In Denmark, for example, “in 1560 the merchant classes still described themselves in a petition as ‘lowly branches shadowing under Your Majesty and the nobility of Denmark’. In 1658, however, the bourgeoisie of Copenhagen were openly calling for ‘admission to offices and privileges on the same terms as the nobles’.”⁷⁶ The demarcation line between the bourgeoisie and aristocracy was porous: the French *noblesse de robe* were “in all juridical respects fully nobles, equals of the aristocracy. In some cities, such as seventeenth-century Amiens, they intermarried [with the bourgeoisie] and were virtually indistinguishable.” Such mixing was commonplace also in the future cradle of industrial capitalism: “by the early seventeenth century it was difficult to find a prominent London capitalist who was not also a substantial landowner.”⁷⁷ The “land revolution” that followed the sixteenth century “price revolution” not only saved the aristocracy, but “entrenched [it] even more firmly into the political life of Europe,” by giving them stable revenues following the rising prices. Second, “the sure guarantee offered by land in a world where most other values seemed to be collapsing inspired those who had been successful in their own fragile enterprises—finance, commerce—to think of their families and to buy an estate or two on which to spend their declining days. Land was both the conserver and the solvent of society; while preserving the old forces, it also gave greater opportunities for wealth and mobility to those who had made their fortunes in professions frowned on by the upper classes.”⁷⁸ In the West, the nobility and the bourgeoisie hence “co-operated in creative development,” whereas in Eastern Europe, the emergence of the new gentry invested in profit-making “checked the growth of an independent merchant class and in some cities destroyed an existing trading sector.”⁷⁹

This is not to say that the West entered a single path. The difference between England and France, for one, was best captured by Brenner in his historical class analysis. He also showed that the class roots of capitalism in Europe were deeper than both Wallerstein and Topolski would have it. Enclosures were possible in England, Brenner argued, because its elite constituted a closely-knit group,

⁷⁵ Henry Kamen, *Early Modern European Society* (London: Routledge, 2000), 78.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 88-89.

⁷⁹ Henry Arthur Francis Kamen, *European Society, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge, 1992), 103.

ethnically distinguished from the peasantry.⁸⁰ The legacy of the Norman Conquest, expressed in the relative cohesion of the English nobility and strength *vis-à-vis* the peasantry and the monarch, meant that English peasants were strong enough to overthrow serfdom, but too weak to establish freehold rights on the available land. Unlike their English counterparts, French peasants wielded “relatively powerful property rights over comparatively large areas of the land,” and employed their political clout for using commons, fixing rents, securing hereditability and replacing old village mayors with their own representatives.⁸¹ Widespread smallholding in France was also the result of a monarch’s support. The crown limited landlords’ power, and eventually “freed” peasants so they could pay less rent and more taxes. As a result, peasantry became the financial basis of the French absolutist state.⁸² Hence, capitalism in England emerged “as an unintended consequence of relations between non-capitalist classes,”⁸³ or put differently, “dissolution of feudalism had more than one outcome in Europe – in particular capitalism in England and absolutism in France,” and nether constituted a “transitional phase in a more or less unilinear path towards capitalism,”⁸⁴ but rather divergent local responses to a more general phenomenon.

Before, following in Brenner’s wake, I will turn to the medieval (Piast) epoch to show class roots of the Polish pathway that fully matured (and manifested itself as the “curious country) in the Jagiellon age, an important caveat has to be made. The divergent class structures in Europe are not only the result of an internal power dynamic and struggle, as Brenner described it. Class formation was an all-European process. The different destinies were an outcome of the interplay between internal class struggles and the global conjuncture. The fact that it was the English method of dissolving feudalism, and responding to the economic pressures of the Italian and Dutch bourgeoisie, that became the means of rising to the third world hegemony, had little to do, as Arrighi stressed, with England’s internal qualities, but more with its geographical position in the world economy, and especially with its capability to take over the Atlantic space-of-flows from the Dutch. Further, England was “invited into development” by the United Provinces: it was only after England had been occupied by the Dutch during the “Glorious Revolution,” and the two formed a “perpetual protestant alliance” against France, that enclosure begun in earnest, and so did the Dutch flight of capital to the Isles.⁸⁵ Poland-Lithuania, on the other hand, was not “invited” to development by the Dutch, because their relation by that time was already exhausted. Although it is difficult to speculate if a Dutch-French alliance against England was possible at the time, it is well *conceivable* that a country other than England succeeded the United Provinces. If not for its world-

⁸⁰ Robert Brenner, “The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism,” *Past and Present*, no. 97 (November 1982): 52.

⁸¹ Robert Brenner, “Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe,” *Past and Present*, no. 70 (February 1976): 46, 68.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 69; see also: Wally Seccombe, *A Millennium of Family Change: Feudalism to Capitalism in Northwestern Europe* (London: Verso, 1992), 247-254.

⁸³ Wood, *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism*, 10.

⁸⁴ Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View*, New ed. (London: Verso, 2002), 52.

⁸⁵ I owe this point to Don Kalb (personal communication, 20 June 2009).

hegemonic position, English industrial potential, as well as the class relations that gave birth to it, would not have been deployed on a global scale, and we would have had a different “ideal type” of a capitalist transition to compare all other deviant, allegedly “impervious to capitalist development,”⁸⁶ cases to.

From class struggle to class formation

Towards anti-urbanism

What predated “second serfdom” in Poland was not first serfdom, but rather a system, dating to the twelfth century, based upon “ducal law” (*ius ducale*), whereby all land belonged, in principle, to the prince (or rather princes competing for power) and peasants were their subjects.⁸⁷ The state apparatus was limited to a narrow military caste extracting surpluses from the peasantry. Yet, peasants were entitled to the land they cultivated, there were no senior nor vassals, and no system of personal dependence. During the twelve and thirteenth centuries, in the period of intensified trade relations on the continent, that for Arrighi represented the “zero point” in capitalist history,⁸⁸ an intensive (estimated at two thousand people annually) migration from the West, introducing Frankish and Flemish legal and technological structures to Poland, spurred cereal production (three-field rotation), encouraged concentrated rural settlement, rent in cash as well as urban growth. Meanwhile, Poland became a “major exporter of primary goods” to the West, mainly timber (its price increased fortyfold throughout the fourteenth century), other forestry products such as wax, ash and honey, as well as flax and hemp. urgently required for shipbuilding and manufacture of sails – the “means of production” for the Dutch.⁸⁹ By the end of the fifteenth century, Poland was relatively densely sown with towns – numbering six hundred, and in the beginning of the seventeenth urban population reached a quarter of Poland’s total.⁹⁰

Precisely this economic growth advanced Krakow to the trading and political center, key for the domestic inland trade as well as maintaining long-distance relations with partners in Italy, Netherlands, Britain or the Orient. Of course, as Carter soberly reminded, Krakow did not match European emporia such as Venice, but “certainly deserved a position on the second rung of the European commercial urban hierarchy.”⁹¹ It was one of the farthest inland members of the Hanseatic League, involved in exchange of both staple and luxury commodities, with extensive

⁸⁶ Robert Brenner, “The Origins of Capitalist Development: a Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism,” *New Left Review*, no. 104 (August 1977): 71.

⁸⁷ Piotr Gorecki, “Ius Ducale Revisited: Twelfth-Century Narratives of Piast Power,” in *The Gallus Anonymus and His Chronicle in the Context of Twelfth-Century Historiography*, ed. Krzysztof Stopka (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności).

⁸⁸ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 87; the “zero point” should rather be sought in what Jack Goody described as the “urban revolution of the Bronze Age,” see: Jack Goody, *Food and Love: A Cultural History of East and West* (London: Verso, 1998), 21-26.

⁸⁹ Kochanowicz, “The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe,” 93-94.

⁹⁰ Maria Bogucka, “Polish towns between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries,” in *A Republic of Nobles*, ed. Jan Krzysztof Fedorowicz, 1982, 138-139.

⁹¹ Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland*, 169.

relations with the Czech lands, Hungary, and Lithuania. Beginnings of its growing prosperity came with the last Piast monarch, who, by founding new towns and rebuilding existing ones, “found Poland dressed in timber and left it dressed in brick,” and who established the Krakow university in 1364, modeled upon the Italian example, as well as introduced the very first country-wide currency.⁹² Soon, Krakow was to host “one of the most vibrant of Renaissance courts,”⁹³ and its university produced, amongst many others, Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), who was the first to argue that Earth revolved around the sun. Soon, figures such as Erasmus of Rotterdam wrote of Poland: “formally ill regarded as barbarian, now it blossoms in letters, laws, customs, religion, and in whatever else may spare it the reproach of uncouthness, that it can vie with the most distinguished and praised nations.”⁹⁴

Every *belle époque*, as Arrighi pointed out, comes after the period that produced it. This was no different with the Piast period. The Polish “golden age” came in the first half of the sixteenth century, when general prosperity, vibrant cultural life good terms were enjoyed by all estates. In fact, the major beneficiaries of the early economic takeoff were the new village mayors (who received one-sixth of land in newly established villages) and the burgers. The nobles, as Topolski pointed out, were lagging behind. This said, we should also emphasize how porous and volatile social categories we use in hindsight actually were. The Polish social structure during that period was in constant flux, and although one can single out “estates,” this notion was not as legally binding as in West Europe. The Polish word *stan* (derivative of the Latin *status*) and/or profession (*profesja*) were used more as indicative of particular “human conditions” and the lifestyle associated with being a clergyman or a burger “rather than orders of society in a strict legal sense.”⁹⁵ The term peasantry (*chłopi*) is actually a twentieth century creation, and one could speak of it as neither a class nor an estate in medieval Poland, as there were various sub-categories describing the different strata of peasantry.⁹⁶ Nor the bourgeoisie constituted an estate. It was internally diversified, and intra-urban solidarities were rare. “Every city had its own structure of orders which defined its citizens’ relative positions, and there was a hierarchical gradation in the position of the cities themselves. Without adding the city of origin and one’s social position within its hierarchy, the bald term *mieszczanin* (town dweller) was of little significance.”⁹⁷

The fast inoculation of first the Renaissance, and then of the Reformation, expressed Poland’s economic prosperity; both were quintessentially urban phenomena. It was no paradox as yet that a political leader and one of the chief of Poland’s “noble democracy,” Jan Zamoyski (1542-1605), founded an Italian-styled city of Zamość

⁹² Ibid., 67.

⁹³ Davies, *Europe*, 554.

⁹⁴ quoted in: Harold B Segel, *Renaissance Culture in Poland: The Rise of Humanism, 1470-1543* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 13.

⁹⁵ Antoni Mączak, “The Structure of Power in the Commonwealth,” in *A Republic of Nobles*, ed. Jan Krzysztof Fedorowicz, 1982, 113.

⁹⁶ These were independent farmers (*kmieć*, *gbur*, or *włóknik*), smallholders (*zagrodnik*, *chałupnik*, or *ogrodnik*) and landless peasants (*komornik*, *kałkownik*, or *parobek*), see: Davies, *God's Playground*, 281.

⁹⁷ Mączak, “The Structure of Power in the Commonwealth,” 115.

(designed by an Paduan architect, and today on UNESCO's world heritage list), that was placed on a prosperous trade route linking Krakow with the Black Sea.⁹⁸ Likewise, Calvinism was quickly espoused by the rising "new gentry." The Brest Bible of 1563 "marked a milestone in popular vernacular publications" and Catechism of the "Polish Brethren" of 1601 was "perhaps the most progressive theological tract of the age."⁹⁹ A chief representative of the new gentry, Anzelm Gostomski (1508-1588), a Calvinist and the author of very popular husbandry manuals, who owned twenty-eight villages, some manufacturing enterprises and was a major grain merchant would be therefore "difficult to place ... in the 'capitalist versus feudal' debate."¹⁰⁰ Although some key figures of the Polish Renaissance, such as Jan Kochanowski (1530-84) "an exquisite poet in the mould of Petrarch or du Bellay,"¹⁰¹ did harbor anti-urban sentiments, extolling the "calm and merry" country life,¹⁰² anti-urbanism was not yet a coherent political program of the gentry; on the contrary, many embraced the urban life and the new opportunities it offered.¹⁰³

What triggered the intensification of class struggle was the new global conjuncture for grain. As already mentioned, the grain trade (concentrated largely around the Vistula river) initially profited both peasants and burgers much more than the gentry. Gostomski's manuals were so popular because the gentry actually had to "beat their swords into ploughshares," and even learn agriculture from the often very resourceful peasants, who, between the mid thirteenth and mid fifteenth centuries, lived their "golden age."¹⁰⁴ They were well-to-do, and had substantial opportunities for social advancement (it was not uncommon to see peasant sons on list of university students)¹⁰⁵ and were serious players on the grain market.¹⁰⁶ In some regions literacy among peasants was higher than among the gentry.¹⁰⁷ Even in the sixteenth century, many peasants participated in the rafting of grain on the Vistula, and maintained economic ties with distant towns.¹⁰⁸ Throughout that period alone their material standing improved three to four times.¹⁰⁹

⁹⁸ Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 259.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 259-260.

¹⁰⁰ Kochanowicz, "The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe," 105.

¹⁰¹ Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 259. See also Segel, *Renaissance Culture in Poland*, 253-256, Janusz Pelc, "Jan Kochanowski, Creator of Polish National Literature, and the Renaissance in Poland," in *The Polish Renaissance in Its European Context*, ed. Samuel Fiszman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 321-343.

¹⁰² Czeslaw Milosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 65.

¹⁰³ Janeczek, "Town and country in the Polish Commonwealth, 1350-1650," 161, Andrzej Wyrobisz, "Power and Towns in the Polish Gentry Commonwealth: The Polish-Lithuanian State in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Theory and Society* 18, no. 5 (September 1989): 615-619.

¹⁰⁴ Józef Burszta, *Chłopskie Źródła Kultury* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1985), 19.

¹⁰⁵ Jarema Maciszewski, *Szlachta Polska I Jej Państwo* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1986), 78-79.

¹⁰⁶ Jerzy Topolski, *Przełom Gospodarczy W Polsce XVI Wieku I Jego Następstwa* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2000), 19, 30-33, 68.

¹⁰⁷ Maria Bogucka, *The Lost World of the "Sarmatians": Custom as the Regulator of Polish Social Life in Early Modern Times* (Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences, 1996), 27.

¹⁰⁸ Burszta, *Chłopskie Źródła Kultury*, 71.

¹⁰⁹ Jerzy Topolski, "Sixteenth-century Poland and European economic development," in *A Republic of Nobles*, ed. Jan Krzysztof Fedorowicz, 1982, 85-88.

Further, the grain trade influenced the urbanization pattern, and undermined Krakow's central position. Krakow grew on inland trade, and river transport was for long unprofitable: "imposition of tolls by some feudal lord on river traffic passing through a section of his territory provided easy prey, whereas carts and pack animals could more easily avoid such fiscal dues" or sheer banditry.¹¹⁰ Soon, however, Krakow started losing its erstwhile monopoly on the north-south trading route. A sharp conflict with Prussian towns, mainly Toruń and Gdańsk, located around the Vistula and the Baltic, led even to dislocation of communications between these cities and Krakow.¹¹¹ From the mid fourteenth century onwards, river transport became increasingly popular as timber and grain turned into one of the major export goods from Poland to Britain and the Netherlands. Initially, Cracow's proximity to the Carpathian foothills made it an excellent trading post in timber – whereas cereals remained a marginal fraction of Krakow's trade, and soon its Achilles' heel.¹¹² The Turkish/Ottoman conquest of virtually all territories littoral of the Black Sea and trading posts such as Feodosiya (Caffa), meant that by 1500 Krakow was virtually cut off from the trades in with the Orient.¹¹³ At the same time, the capturing of Gdańsk from the Teutonic Order in 1466, gave a powerful stimulus for the grain production in Poland. Strengthening its relations with Hungary and Lithuania was intended to counterbalance Krakow's accelerating marginalization *vis-à-vis* grain-based and German-dominated towns mushrooming around the Vistula and the Baltic coast, and certainly contributed (together with the polonization of Krakow's merchant class) towards Krakow's image of a bulwark of Polishness amidst a sea of foreign intruders, but did not help in turning the tide of its economic and political decline.¹¹⁴

Class mobilization of space

The changing economic geography of Poland soon matched a change in its social geography. The success of the gentry, and the genesis of Poland's "merchant feudalism," as well as of the Jagiellon space, all lay in the way the Polish *szlachta* managed to mobilize "the factor of territoriality" to its advantage, and employ the mechanism of "opportunity hoarding" for establishing a class monopoly.¹¹⁵ Crops slated for export, in fact, represented only a thin economic integument to a vast and seething internal market – not more than 2.5 per cent of Poland's total grain production.¹¹⁶ The entire Baltic region sent to the West less than 100,000 tons of grain annually. This could satisfy the needs of not more than 750,000 individuals. Given that the European population of that time was estimated at 104 million, the Baltic region hence occupied even less than 1 per cent of the continent's grain

¹¹⁰ Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland*, 93.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

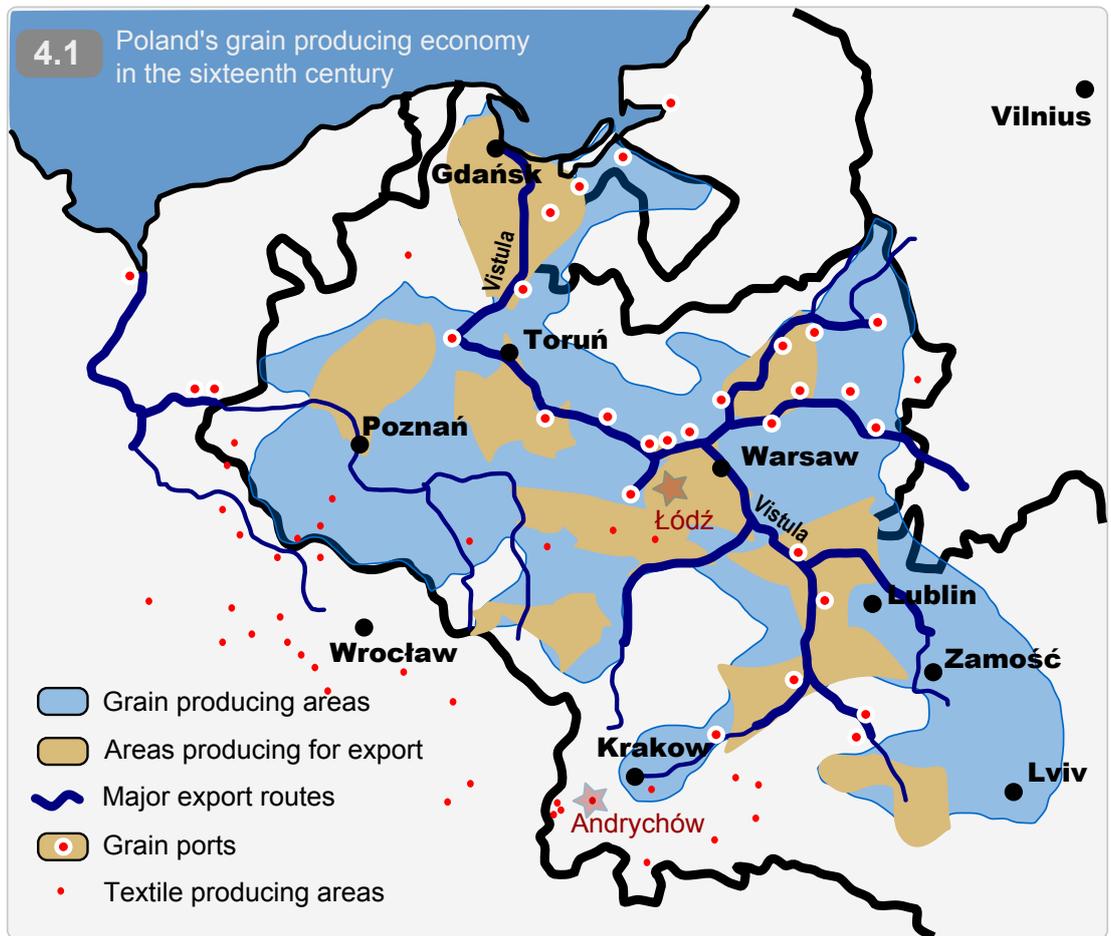
¹¹² *Ibid.*, 139, 142.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

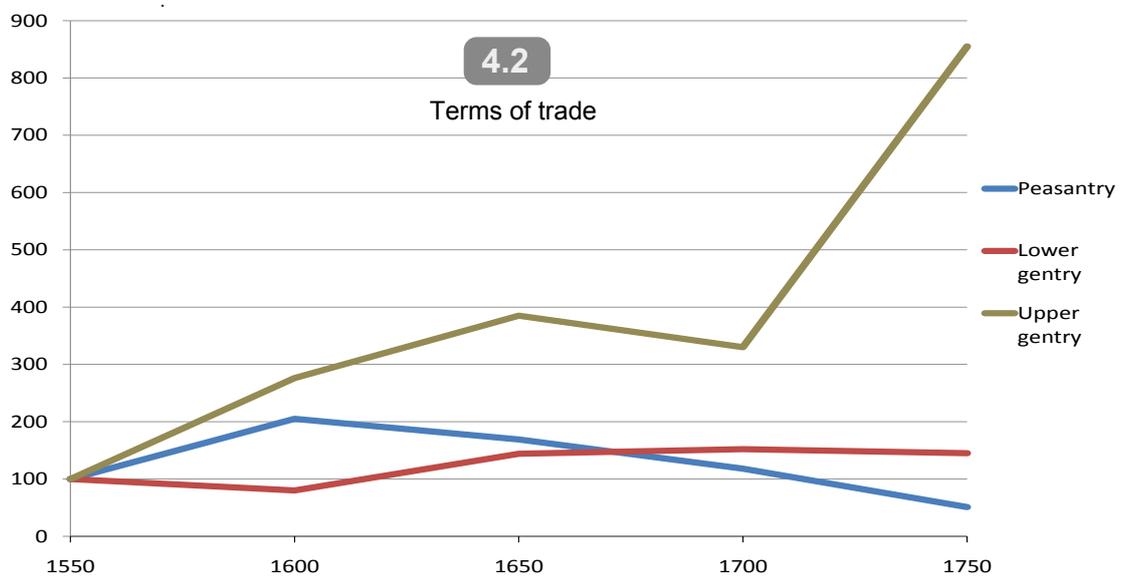
¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 86, Bogucka, "Polish towns between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries," 140.

¹¹⁵ Tilly, "Relational origins of inequality," 366.

¹¹⁶ Topolski, "Sixteenth-century Poland and European economic development," 84.



Source: Jerzy Topolski, "Sixteenth-century Poland and European economic development." In *A Republic of Nobles*, edited by Jan Krzysztof Fedorowicz, 1982, p. 73.



Source: Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System*, 1976, p. 123

Plate four

Poland's merchant feudalism and the terms of trade enjoyed in it by the various classes

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market.¹¹⁷ This notwithstanding, the Baltic grain was “exceptionally important, both because of the prosperity it brought to such seafarers as the Dutch and because it represented the margin of survival for capital cities such as Lisbon.”¹¹⁸ Further, the Baltic supplies of grain “had been made absolutely essential to the conduct of war by land and sea in Europe by the exhaustion of competing Mediterranean supplies.” Thanks to the decline of the Hanseatic League, “the Dutch mercantile community had been uniquely positioned to exploit this chronic temporal and spatial disequilibrium between demand and supply” of grain.¹¹⁹ By doing so, they managed to dislodge the Genoese from the commanding heights of the world economy.

The thriving internal market for grain was, of course, linked to Poland's urbanization. Soon, two types of a large agricultural demesnes, the *folwark* (between 50 and 80 acres), producing cereals for sale, emerged: ones producing for export, and others producing for the home market. As Plate Four demonstrates, the former were nearly exclusively located on territories littoral of the Baltic and the Vistula river. Although the export economy was lower in volume, it soon grew rapidly in significance. As transportation costs amounted to 70 percent of the overall costs incurred by the producers for the international market, only those who possessed substantial wherewithal to organize long-distance transport entered it. These were mainly the large landowners, known in Poland-Lithuania as the magnates, the Church and the Crown.¹²⁰ Grain prices in Gdańsk were strongly correlated to those in the hinterland,¹²¹ and the “capitalist facade” exerted a powerful effect on the economy of the hinterland. The class struggle in Poland-Lithuania was, as Witold Kula argued, the struggle to control the urban grain market of the interior.¹²² The *szlachta* set out to monopolize it for two purposes. First, by eliminating the burgers, the gentry could siphon off all the surpluses from the production. But more importantly, the urban market for grain was the main outlet for the peasant producers, who often did not have enough resources to organize long-distance trade. Because of intensive migration to cities, peasant labor in the countryside was becoming scarce, and hence there was nobody to work on the *folwarks*. By thwarting the growth of cities (and the local market), the gentry eliminated its two major competitors, and also “secured” the workforce necessary for more profitable production. Thereby, peasants was slowly turned into serfs, and the country was “refeudalized,” or rather its “merchant feudalism” was established.

The net result of these struggles was the emergence of a dual economy; class interests propelled a profound geographical externalization of capitalism from the Polish hinterland – both rural and urban. Consequently, a sharp division between the

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Charles Tilly quoted in: Wallerstein, *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, 76.

¹¹⁹ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 132.

¹²⁰ Kochanowicz, “The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe,” 101.

¹²¹ Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System: Towards a Model of the Polish Economy, 1500-1800* (London: N.L.B., 1976), 88.

¹²² Witold Kula, “Class struggle in the Polish countryside from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries,” in *Measures and Men* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 386, see also: Wyrobisz, “Power and Towns in the Polish Gentry Commonwealth.”

“capitalist” city of Gdańsk and the “feudalizing” hinterland emerged. A vibrant urban network was an impediment to “merchant feudalism.” Instead, a single yet powerful “gatekeeper city,” to paraphrase Fredrick Cooper,¹²³ was necessary as means of separating market exchange from the “feudalizing” hinterland. Thus Gdańsk became Poland-Lithuania’s largest city, with population of 70,000 by the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was double the size of Warsaw or Kraków, triple of Poznań or Lwów, and sextuple of Toruń, Elbląg or Lublin.¹²⁴ It was Poland-Lithuania’s “shop-window of European life,” a “materialist Mecca to which the Polish nobleman was drawn and tempted – to buy and sell, to be ruined or to make his fortune, to load himself with trinkets and luxuries for his house and family to hear the news and gaze at the sights, and, at least, relieved and exhausted, to sail against the current of the Vistula on the long, slow journey home.”¹²⁵ Gdańsk hosted large manufacturing of nonagricultural goods (also purchased by Polish nobles), produced in over 3,000 workshops, agricultural farming, banking and finance sectors and so forth. Gdańsk was politically independent from Poland-Lithuania, its patricians pursued their own foreign policy and minted their own currency. Further, as Poland was becoming Catholic, Gdańsk was Protestant, its denizens spoke German, rather than Polish, and its architecture resembled that of Lübeck rather than Kraków.¹²⁶

Gdańsk isolation from the grain-producing hinterland worked in favor of relegating the thriving second Braudelian layer (that of internal market) to the lowest economic rung – that of subsistence.¹²⁷ Already in 1496 gentry obtained important tax exceptions, burgers were prohibited to own land, Polish merchants to travel abroad, and maximum prices were set on some non-agricultural products. *Szlachta* producers sought to “bypass town merchants by shipping their grain independently to Baltic ports, where they dealt directly with the great Gdańsk wholesalers, who monopolized exports by advancing cash to their suppliers and acting as brokers for foreign commodities.”¹²⁸ When, due to the anti-urban legislation pursued by the Polish gentry, Gdańsk became a fully city controlled by Dutch and English merchants who have “squeeze[ed] their local competitors until something approaching foreign monopoly was established,”¹²⁹ and could even dictate the prices to Polish producers who either sold what they brought or sailed back laden with grain that was of little use back home. Barred from conducting regular trading activities, towns of the interior were gradually pushed to the economic doldrums.¹³⁰ Thus, by “internalizing” the export economy in Gdańsk alone, the nobles managed to establish a class monopoly; in the sixteenth century some 70 percent of grain

¹²³ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*, New approaches to African history (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹²⁴ Bogucka, “Polish towns between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries,” 139.

¹²⁵ Davies, *God's Playground*, 272.

¹²⁶ Kochanowicz, “The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe,” 113.

¹²⁷ Andrzej Kaminski, “Neo-Serfdom in Poland-Lithuania,” *Slavic Review* 34, no. 2 (June 1975): 253-268.

¹²⁸ Janeczek, “Town and country in the Polish Commonwealth, 1350-1650,” 170.

¹²⁹ Davies, *God's Playground*, 258.

¹³⁰ Topolski, “Sixteenth-century Poland and European economic development,” 82.

rafted down the Vistula was already in their hands.¹³¹ This is how a dual economy emerged; it comprised merely of a place linked with the capitalist “attic” and a feudalizing “basement,” with was hollow in the middle.

To be sure, urbanization of the Polish hinterland did not stop altogether. Instead, it fundamentally changed its character. Between the fourteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth there were nearly 2,500 town plantations in Poland-Lithuania. But cities were no longer centers of commerce, but rather served as administrative and political posts for the *szlachta*; east-ward urbanization of Poland-Lithuania was closely linked to the expansion of the cash-crop economy based upon serfdom. Now the “town could become a residence for magnate, nobleman, or bishop, an ancestral home used to establish its owner’s reputation, or a military stronghold.” By owning a town, the *szlachta* could also quell the urban market. Paradoxically urbanization gradually became “associated with the great landowners objective to make their estates increasingly self-sufficient.”¹³² This was reflected in the *szlachta* ideology. As Gostomski’s put it, “it is not only harmful, but shameful to buy with money, as a result of neglectfulness, what could be had without expense,”¹³³ and hence *szlachta* favored imports of manufactured goods instead of buying them domestically. Commodities were therefore either to be obtained personally (preferably in Gdańsk), or produced locally. Gentry’s manufacturing enterprises were not aimed at making profit, but only as substituting import, so “in this way the money derived from the sale [of grain] can be used more effectively,” as one avoids unnecessary monetary spending.¹³⁴ Moreover, anti-urban campaign brought a virtual devastation of the local market, upon which peasants’ economic prosperity depended. Peasant migration to towns was also tightly controlled: from 1496 cities were prohibited from hiring short-term unskilled laborers, and migration from the countryside to the town was regulated at a maximum of one person per village annually. All beggars and wandering individuals were now required to be sent to work on agricultural estates.¹³⁵ As a result, both peasants and burgers were gradually evicted from participating in monetary economy, and pushed towards subsistence.¹³⁶ Just as at the close of the Middle Ages, “town autonomy in Poland was comparable to that existing in western Europe”¹³⁷ by the seventeenth towns were tightly controlled by the nobles, and in fact were wholly subjugated to the single-crop producing economy, and peasants’ contact with the urban market was kept to the outmost minimum.¹³⁸

¹³¹ Kochanowicz, “The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe,” 112.

¹³² Janeczek, “Town and country in the Polish Commonwealth, 1350-1650,” 173-174.

¹³³ quoted in: Witold Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System: Towards a Model of the Polish Economy, 1500-1800*, Foundations of history library (London: N.L.B, 1976), 141.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹³⁵ Topolski, “Sixteenth-century Poland and European economic development,” 71.

¹³⁶ Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System*, 37.

¹³⁷ Bogucka, “Polish towns between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries,” 147.

¹³⁸ Bohdan Baranowski, *Kultura Ludowa XVII I XVIII W. Na Ziemiach Polski Środkowej* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1971), 386.

Externalizing capitalism, internalizing feudalism

One may wonder why this trend towards a geographical separation of capitalism and feudalism. The answer is simple: the Polish-Dutch grain trade was profitable only as long as low costs of production were maintained. “Despite alternative supplied,” argued Topolski, the Dutch merchants “willingly bought Polish grain because the different social systems in the East and the West ensured a larger profit margin.”¹³⁹ They fetched an excellent price in Gdańsk: average profit made on rye exported to Amsterdam was once estimated at 62 per cent for the period of 1600-1650.¹⁴⁰ Maintaining non-capitalist unevenness of Poland-Lithuania was vital for that profitability. This is why the Dutch never plowed back the profits they made on the Baltic grain into “developing” Poland’s grain-producing economy, and turning into a “more effective” capitalist agriculture like the one in Britain. The most likely outcome of this “would have been an upward pressure on purchase prices, and/or a downward pressure on sale prices, which would have destroyed its profitability.” Instead, the Dutch merchants put these surpluses into land and other rent-bearing assets, and entered a relationship of political exchange with House of Orange. The net outcome of this was the United Provinces.¹⁴¹

Because only the largest players on the grain market were actually able to trade with the Dutch (and the volume of grain sold abroad actually started falling after 1618), as Jan Rutkowski argued already in 1928, gentry’s relative position improved thanks to their stealthy yet persistent reduction of peasant’s share in the grain market.¹⁴² Accumulation was therefore achieved by dispossession stretched in time.¹⁴³ Because gentry’s export estates “grew mainly at the expense of the village grounds (uncultivated areas, commons) but not, as in England, at the expense of the peasant farm lands,”¹⁴⁴ there was no peasant revolt against the changes. By establishing their monopoly over the domestic flow of cash, and relegating peasant economy to the subsistence sector, the gentry further reduced the costs of the production of grain, and hence bolstered its profitability. In fact, initially only the largest grain producers used coerced labor; large swathes of the middling *szlachta* entrepreneurs used hired labor for cereal production.¹⁴⁵ This is how most gentry “entered” the grain market in the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁶ Yet introducing money rents was both ineffective and unprofitable in the longer run, because it gave peasants cash, and hence bolstered their position. The fourteenth century migration to towns made rural labor force scarce. Money rent was often not attractive enough to keep peasants in the countryside. If they nobles wanted peasants to work the land, the

¹³⁹ Topolski, “Sixteenth-century Poland and European economic development,” 84.

¹⁴⁰ Davies, *God's Playground*, 278.

¹⁴¹ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 134-135.

¹⁴² Kochanowicz, “The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe,” 98.

¹⁴³ David Harvey, “Accumulation by Dispossession,” in *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 137-182, see also: Katherine Verdery, “Inequality as temporal process: Property and time in Transylvania's land restitution,” *Anthropological Theory* 1, no. 3 (September 1, 2001): 373-392.

¹⁴⁴ Topolski, “The Manorial-Serf Economy in Central and Eastern Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries,” 349-350.

¹⁴⁵ Kochanowicz, “The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe,” 101.

¹⁴⁶ Topolski, “Sixteenth-century Poland and European economic development,” 82.

only way was to actually *force* them.¹⁴⁷ With a shrinking domestic market, and with the monarch's support, this was increasingly possible. What used to be customary obligation before, the *corvée*—labor dues ranging from one to twelve days a year—were being gradually raised. From 1520 it became obligatory for peasants to work at least one day every week on their squire's land,¹⁴⁸ and the sovereign relinquished his erstwhile privilege to interfere in peasant-gentry conflicts; henceforth, peasants had no higher body that they could appeal to: nobles became their masters of life and death, and wrought absolute control over their places of production.¹⁴⁹ By then, most of the peasant elite had been disposed – the process of evicting or buying out the village mayors commenced already in the 1430s. Serfdom, by lowering money outlays, rose profits; by the mid sixteenth century, villages where serfdom had been introduced were giving their owners on average 40 per cent more *money income* per unit of land than villages paying money rents.¹⁵⁰

Hence, it was in the interest of both the Dutch merchants and the Polish merchants-cum-producers of grain to “externalize” rather than to internalize the costs of production. In other words, the *szlachta* relinquished commoditization of labor in order to commoditize the fruits of it. This ushered in a powerful remaking of the place of production (that the gentry assumed a complete control over). Portability was contingent upon “tasks being spatially separated: the peasant plots produced almost all that was for consumption (this product also served in part to keep the administration supplied through the rent in kind paid by the peasants) together with all that was required to reproduce the productive potential; whereas the surplus product [was] produced almost exclusively on the land of the demesne.”¹⁵¹ Peasants bore the brunt not only of simple reproduction, but also of investment: drought animals grazed on peasant plots, and peasants were required to bring their own tools to work on the *folwark*. As peasant plots were gradually acquiring a subsistence character, peasants sought to increase area under their cultivation by nibbling away small parts of vacant plots, rooting up thickets, harrowing unplanted land, tilling pastures and meadows and so forth. They continued to struggle through economic resistance. Yet, usually once every generation when inheritance was being bestowed, an inventory of land was made. At this moment, the lords “appropriated the area under cultivation which had increased thanks to the efforts of a generation of peasants.”¹⁵²

Such externalization of production costs, or unwillingness to take up the mantle of reproduction, has often been taken as the portent of *szlachta*'s “non-capitalist mindset.” To Peter Burke, for example, the Polish merchant feudalism revealed that

¹⁴⁷ Kochanowicz, “The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe,” 99-100.

¹⁴⁸ Jerzy Topolski, “Economic Activity of the Polish Nobility and its Consequences: The Manorial System in the Early Modern Times,” in *European aristocracies and colonial elites*, ed. Paul Janssens and Bartolomé Yun Casalilla (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 172.

¹⁴⁹ Jarema Maciszewski, *Szlachta Polska I Jej Państwo [The Polish Gentry and its State]*, 2nd ed., Biblioteka Wiedzy Historycznej (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1986), 105.

¹⁵⁰ Topolski, “Economic Activity of the Polish Nobility and its Consequences: The Manorial System in the Early Modern Times,” 173.

¹⁵¹ Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System*, 50.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 70-71.

“the laws of classical economics may not apply everywhere.” The *szlachta* never reinvested their revenues in order to increase yields, but instead was interested in “receiving a steady income which would enable them to live in the manner to which they were accustomed. When the price of rye fell...they presumably asked the overseers to work the serfs harder. When the price of rye rose, everyone relaxed.”¹⁵³ As Arrighi pointed out, the English internalized the costs of production only after they have become the “entrepôt of the world.” Extensive and long-term investments into the production process are rational *only* as long as one wields control over terms of exchange. As the Polish producers of grain had no control over highly volatile prices (not only in Gdańsk, let alone in Amsterdam) it made more sense for them to employ flexible labor force in adjusting to these fluctuations rather than embark on large-scale investments into the means of production (agriculture). In order to sell the grain in Gdańsk one had to organize a risky rafting on the Vistula, and even when one got there, it was not certain what kind of price one could fetch, or worse still, if one could sell to the Dutch at all.¹⁵⁴ If one reduced one’s monetary costs to the outmost minimum (and this could be achieved by introducing serfdom and pushing peasants toward subsistence), then *any* amount one accrued in Gdańsk represented a profit.¹⁵⁵ When grain prices fell, squeezing the serf a little harder was a more rational (and faster) response than plowing back money into material investments that could soon prove to be wasteful. The “business logic” under merchant feudalism was quite “capitalist,” only that the circumstances in which the producers operated were very different from that observed the hegemonic core.

The remaining issue of how the *szlachta* actually managed to impose its authority on both the burgers and the peasantry has been subject, of course, of a long and heated dispute. I suggest formulating the questions thus: why the class struggle of the Piast period (when borders between classes were not clearly defined) lead merely to the emergence of one class, the *szlachta*, while the process of class formation was enervated or even inhibited for both the peasantry and the burgers. The answer lays in the nature of the political alliance between the middling nobles and the rising state power in the fourteenth century. The middling nobles effectively managed to play out the various duke’s completion for state power in the times of political fragmentation; their position was further strengthened during the sensitive moment of political vacuum commencing the dying out of the Piast dynasty. The interregnum between 1370 and 1386 “triggered the emancipation of the middle stratum of Polish nobility, the *szlachta*.”¹⁵⁶ It was the *szlachta* who invited, already as an “organized force,” a Lithuanian dynasty to take the Polish throne, but demanded a number of privileges in return. The Lithuanians were the very last pagan house in Europe, and this made their bargaining position weak. At this very moment “the *szlachta* gained their critical experience [as a class].”¹⁵⁷ Ever since, each royal succession of the Jagiellons was contingent upon a permission given by

¹⁵³ Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992), 46-47.

¹⁵⁴ Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 267.

¹⁵⁵ Kochanowicz, “The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe,” 101.

¹⁵⁶ Maciszewski, *Szlachta Polska I Jej Państwo*, 53.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

Polish nobility, and it effectively limited the royal power, and extended the gentry's privileges *vis-à-vis* burgers and peasants. Until the extinction of the Jagiellon dynasty in 1572, royal power was on the rise at the expense of the upper layer of gentry, the magnates.¹⁵⁸ By then, the *szlachta* had most political and economic privileged they needed; already in 1454 the principle of legal equality of all members of the *szlachta* was introduced, and this can be regarded as the political moment of their birth as a class.¹⁵⁹

Moreover, because of *szlachta*'s growing political clout, they became the most important agency organizing the incipient state. The Renaissance, as Norman Davies pointed out, was "never confined to Italy or to Italian fashions, and its effects were steadily disseminated throughout Latin Christendom."¹⁶⁰ In Poland, it "struck deep roots," and "its ideas penetrated far deeper than the Italian architecture or derivative painting of the period might suggest."¹⁶¹ Its effects were mainly in the spread of literacy, knowledge of Latin (even Defoe was impressed that Polish rank-and-file nobles were fluent in Latin), and political culture. As Poles became accustomed to literary culture, and as "Roman political vocabulary started being in widespread use," they started to engage in contentious politics.¹⁶² In other words, the *szlachta* were the ones who consumed politically both the Renaissance and Reformation; the culture of contention, directly adopted from the Italian city-states and even the Ancient Roman tradition, became the cornerstone of their integrity as a class. And precisely as a class they could, unlike peasants and burgers that were increasingly "fixed" in a place, assume a superior command over space.¹⁶³ What they shared was the privilege of liberty – "the highest of all goods," as one a sixteen century pamphleteer argued. Political liberty was "the property of your clan and your family. It is so vast and so great that in comparison, the liberty of other nations would be unbearable servitude to us."¹⁶⁴ Polish nobles were *not* organized hierarchically into a French-style feudal ladder, but, in principle, were all equal. They were too organized into clans: no Polish noble had a coat of arms of his own, but instead held arms in common with his fellow clansmen. From the economic point of view, members of the *szlachta* were substantially differentiated. What they shared was their political privileges; the *szlachta* mobilized as a class for both political and military action. In other words, liberty and political rights, as another pundit put it century later, brought unity to geographically divided Commonwealth; although different in customs, laws and language, "all provinces without exception

¹⁵⁸ Andrzej Wyczański, "The problem of authority in sixteenth century Poland," in *A Republic of Nobles*, ed. Jan Krzysztof Fedorowicz, 1982, 99.

¹⁵⁹ Topolski, *Narodziny Kapitalizmu*, 86.

¹⁶⁰ Davies, *Europe*, 473.

¹⁶¹ Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 259.

¹⁶² Bogdan Suchodolski, *Dzieje Kultury Polskiej* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Interpress, 1980), 101-102, 117.

¹⁶³ See also: Javier Auyero, "Spaces and places as sites and objects of politics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Robert E Goodin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 569.

¹⁶⁴ Stanisław Orzechowski quoted in: Koyama, "The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a Political Space: Its Unity and Complexity," 143.

are equal in their way of life, the privileges of liberty, and the attainment of honor.”¹⁶⁵

The *szlachta* was the largest franchised group in Europe of the time. They exercised their privileges of liberty through the political system of their “mixed monarchy,” that combined elements of monarchical, aristocratic and democratic rule in one polity. From 1493 a bicameral Diet was regularly held, and its lower house (*Sejm*) represented the interests of the ordinary gentry (democratic element); its higher house (*Senat*) hosted Catholic bishops and high-rank secular officials (aristocratic element), and both elected their monarch. It remains an open question why the burgers decided not to be represented in the Diets – most probably they sought to retain independence by negotiating directly with the King. For a long time, the burgers actually received royal privileges alongside the *szlachta*, but by the late fifteenth century this ended. While the state power was on the rise and the grain conjuncture good, this system worked pretty well for everybody. Because at the height of its prosperity, Poland-Lithuania faced no external threat, its nobles did not have to organize around a strong state.¹⁶⁶ Instead, the centrifugal political and economic tendencies of the export-led economy undermined the state. The elected monarchs, mainly invited from foreign royal families, as one may imagine, had a very weak position in Poland-Lithuania. As the gentry refused to pay taxes, Polish army was not only negligible numerically but also in terms of its combat strength. Eventually the budget of Poland-Lithuania was to become 5 per cent of that of England, and below 3 per cent of that of France.¹⁶⁷ Authority was powerfully and irreversibly decentralized, while the decentralized power was increasingly held in single hands: a Polish nobleman thus turned into a Renaissance man in the worst sense of the word, personally controlling all departments of the economy: production, transport, trade and consumption. By monopolizing political space, they also wielded virtually absolute power over place. A foreign visitor observed in the 1660s that the Polish noble “fully succumbs to his inclinations and does not recognize any other master but freedom.”¹⁶⁸ The putative anarchy of that “curious country” boiled down to the fact that class-power could be abused at will, and, as Paweł Jasienica noted, there was nobody to “take the weak ones in defense.”¹⁶⁹

While the times were good, even the increasingly burdened peasants managed to keep their heads above water, and the massive economic polarization within the *szlachta* class was of little importance. When the Dutch withdrew from the Baltic trade, intra-class competition within the gentry intensified. The shrinking domestic market (result of the anti-urban and anti-peasant policies) crowded out many of the lesser noble players. Throughout the sixteenth century, alienation of some popular *szlachta* political leaders led to the emergence of a narrow group of upper gentry –

¹⁶⁵ quoted in: *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁶⁶ Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1989), 286.

¹⁶⁷ Piotr Stefan Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1993), 87.

¹⁶⁸ Bogucka, *The Lost World of the "Sarmatians"*, 23.

¹⁶⁹ Paweł Jasienica, *Polska Anarchia*, 3rd ed. (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1993), 132.

the magnates. They were better suited for weathering crises and organizing long-distance trade. By profiting from many bankruptcies, they gradually amassed land and hijacked the state. Intra-gentry competition, as well as the perpetual threat of debasement to serfdom, faced by many nobles, further became a further dynamo towards class formation. Peasants were turned into serfs. The *szlachta* emerge as a group racially distinguished from them. Class became conterminous with race. The transition from the Piast Poland to the Jagiellon Poland was complete.



Photograph Four – Old housing for the Poznański mill workers

THE CURSE OF HAM

Before I turn in Chapters Six and Seven to the issue of the urbanization of consumption, and analyze, following Manuel Castells, class struggles that accompanied it, I need to outline the role of consumption, and in particular of competitive conspicuous consumption, in the class formation process. The industrial class formation, as will be evident in the rise of “Poland’s Manchester” in Łódź, except for polarizing populations at the workplace, was also strongly influenced by consumption. When analyzed only from within, then one could speak of Łódź as a quintessential dual city; the way the textile industry operated facilitated the congruence of community and class; on one hand, there were the German-speaking factory owners and skilled workers, and on the other, Polish-speaking textile proletariat working in the large mills, and Jewish artisans working in sweatshops. The cultural superiority of the German urban culture, *vis-à-vis* the “backward” Polish ex-serfs and the Hassidic Jews, was essentially a “displacement” of class categories forged in the hidden abode of production onto the urban tissue. But, I wish to argue, there was another class mechanism at work here. If we treat Łódź as a whole, and analyze its relation to Warsaw (and hence its “relative location” in the Jagiellon space), then a different class relation—one that is quintessentially a relation across space—emerges. While the production-based class divisions proved important for the place-based politics both during the 1905 revolution and directly after World War Two (the latter described in Chapters Four and Five), and contributed to the coalescing of the Piast agenda, the more fundamental class relation between Łódź and Warsaw, one anchored in the Jagiellon space, became increasingly salient from the long 1960s onwards, as the reader will discover in Part Three. And it is the latter class division that, in my view, explains Łódź’s current predicaments, and its inglorious fame as “the evil city.”

The Jagiellon nature of class in Poland is well visible in the centuries-long history of the “curse of Ham.” This Biblical story was “localized” in Poland in the during the seventeenth century process of class formation, or rather, the racialization of class boundaries associated with the crisis of “merchant feudalism.” In the first part of this chapter, I describe how status anxiety, competitive conspicuous consumption and the pauperization of swathes of the middling and lower gentry, propelled them to embrace racial theories that counterbalanced their worsening lot by claiming they were inherently superior to the peasants, who during the Jagiellon epoch were gradually being turned into serfs. *Chamstwo* eventually denoted the class of “racially” distinct serfs, and I describe the role played by “drug foods” in that process. Yet, I will argue, the curse of Ham was not only a nasty label – it was also a powerful class-forming instrument separating the “deserving” elite from the “undeserving” one. That meaning of *chamstwo* – essentially a ban on social mobility – continued to be important also after the complete debacle of the Jagiellon economy. In the remaining part of this chapter, I describe how during the late nineteenth century industrialization, of which Łódź the prime outcome, the curse of Ham loomed large. Łódź gave opportunities for upward mobility to those who had been denied it for centuries – mainly the Jews and the serfs, as well as pauperized weavers who came there from Saxony and Bohemia. As analyzed “from within,” Łódź was a city inhabited by three hostile ethnic communities. But understood from the point of view of its “relative location” in a larger spatial field of power, Łódź was actually a melting pot, where the mixing of the Jews, Poles and Germans gave rise to a distinct “ethnicity” referred to as the *Lodzermensch*. *Chamstwo* was, according to their anti-urban critics, one of its most distinctive features. Being the sole interstice in the largely agricultural society and economy, Łódź was therefore haunted by the curse of Ham, as soon became evident from both the structure of its spatial uneven development as well as the abortive fate of its 1905 revolution.

Early modern status anxiety

Competitive conspicuous consumption

If the coffers of Poland-Lithuania were empty, Polish nobles hardly reinvested their revenues, and, as we have seen, the *szlachta* fought fiercely to guard their monopoly over the flow of cash, then where did all the money go? The answer is simple: conspicuous consumption. Amounts put into it were indeed overwhelming. Prince Poniatowski, one of Poland’s largest landowners, reinvested only 7 per cent of revenues into his estate, and the rest was spent on “keeping up his standard of living.”¹ Polish nobles, wrote Davies, were “inordinately fond of ceremony for ceremony’s sake. They were specially addicted to processions, where they could dress up in their finery and strut in peacock-display of their wealth and quality.” Further, their “obvious delight in the possession of valuable objects was matched by their preference for anything which was rich, loud, strange or new. It inevitably

¹ Topolski, *Narodziny Kapitalizmu*, 34.

devalued simplicity and usefulness, and led to the eventual substitution of foreign fashions for homespun virtues.” The *szlachta* “was spoiled by the spirit of excess [and] put ostentation before substance ... It was maintained by an estate where some family inventories listed diamonds and pearls by the bucketful and silver plate by the hundredweight, but where the majority of people lived close to the breadline.” Precisely such pattern of uneven development, driven by conspicuous consumption, shocked King Frederick’s interlocutor, quoted in Chapter Two. The “curious country” resembled, as Thomas Carlyle put it, “a beautifully phosphorescent rot-heap.”²

Conspicuous consumption was, however, not as irrational as it may have seemed. It was closely embedded in the class logic of the Jagiellon political and economic space. Andrzej Zajączkowski once argued that Poland-Lithuania functioned as “a society of neighbors.” This notion captures the spatiality of the horizontal (“fraternal”) relations between the gentry, as well as their tight control over the localities they owned and administered. Equal only in theory, the noble “society of neighbors” actually resembled a pyramid, with “large societies of neighbors” (*sąsiedztwo wielkie*) placed over “small societies of neighbors” (*sąsiedztwo małe*). The former were dominated by the upper nobles, whereas the latter by the middling and lesser gentry.³ Any effective political action required mobilization of such societies of neighbors, and this was executed primarily through the local diet (*sejmik*). Here both cash and personal cunning were indispensable. And for this consumption became very useful. “Social rank of a nobleman” wrote Davies, “was dependent on the number of clients he had to feed. The scroungers and court ‘attendants’ who lived in the manor house of a small rural nobleman, the great court establishments, the retinues, the corps of mercenaries, the great number of nobleman who at every opportunity were housed as guests in the palaces and castles of greater nobility” were all a case in point.⁴

Careers in the Piast Poland were made largely through royal appointments, and one’s wealth or birth was unimportant for these. Instead, it was contingent upon one’s political alliances that were often plotted by the upper gentry.⁵ In a society heading towards increased localism and even autarky, anybody with supralocal information was privileged and enjoyed considerable clout. While still throughout much of the sixteenth century, the middling gentry generally controlled the local diet, gradually the upper nobles used their increasing supralocal connections as well as conspicuous consumption in order to organize the local public opinion and to take over the local diet.⁶ The class of the magnates emerged in the sixteenth century precisely through alienation of the most successful gentry leaders from their local “base.” Their power, however, continued to be dependent on local political support,

² Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 331, 343-344.

³ Andrzej Zajączkowski, *Szlachta Polska: Kultura I Struktura* (Warszawa: Semper, 1993), Koyama, “The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a Political Space: Its Unity and Complexity,” 146. See also: Bogucka, *The Lost World of the "Sarmatians"*, chap. 1.

⁴ Davies, *God's Playground*, 243-244.

⁵ Wyczański, “The problem of authority in sixteenth century Poland,” 105.

⁶ Mączak, “The Structure of Power in the Commonwealth,” 118-119.

rather than, as it was in the West, on residence in the capital or with the King.⁷ They employed various ploys, including conspicuous consumption, for maintaining their local foothold. Political mobilization in Poland-Lithuania was executed through a “one-time commercial transaction involving an exchange of political rights [by lesser nobles] in return for cash advances as well as food and drink” at the diet.⁸

Of course, conspicuous consumption was not a Jagiellon invention. As noted in the previous chapter, the Italian and later Dutch “demonstration effect” put immense pressures on the European aristocracy, and propelled them towards new economic activities. “Invented” in Renaissance Florence, conspicuous consumption was “not altogether wasteful, but, on the contrary, resulted in a considerable internal economic development and, ultimately, a more mature economy.”⁹ It was marked by internal competition, class mobility, or “status anxiety” – a notion recently picked up by Alain de Botton.¹⁰ Because the new classes rose in cities, on the one hand, conspicuous consumption was associated with upward mobility, and became the attribute of the urban *nouveau riche*. On the other hand, it was associated with downward mobility and the spiral of pauperization. The French king allegedly encouraged nobles to live at his court so “by play, and other unthriftiness, they grow poor.” By consuming, however, they could keep up the appearances; “everyone judges me to be rich,” confessed a Spanish duke in the seventeenth century, “and I do not wish outsiders to know differently because it would not be to my credit for them to understand that I am poor.”¹¹ Conspicuous consumption was hence also a form of camouflage.

I could be argued that, once invented by the Italians, conspicuous consumption started spreading globally during the Dutch hegemony. Peter Burke noted its remarkable rise between the late sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries; a rise not restricted to Europe but reaching China and Japan too. It coincided with the proliferation of “mobile properties,” increasing heed paid to commodities, and a new interest in material culture.¹² The Dutch hegemony could be regarded as the pivotal moment in the transition from “luxury cultures” wherein consumption of commodities was restricted only to the upper rungs of the society to “consumer cultures” wherein “material goods and cultural products are shared more widely among the mass of the population.”¹³ During the sixteenth century ideals of a respectable dwelling, that initially arrived to Poland from Italy, consolidated. Now every nobleman wished to live in a single or two-storied building, usually wooden but sometimes brick, with a porch, divided by hallway and with numerous chambers

⁷ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁹ Richard A Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), xiii.

¹⁰ Alain De Botton, *Status Anxiety* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2004).

¹¹ Kamen, *European Society, 1500-1700*, 105-106.

¹² Peter Burke, “Res et verba: conspicuous consumption in the early modern period,” in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1994), 156-158 See also: Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹³ Goody, *Food and Love*, 193.

and alcoves. Eventually “Turkish or Persian carpets decorated the walls, floors, and furniture of almost every rich gentry manorhouse. As a result, the interiors gave a cozy impression and displayed a whole palette of rich hues.” This effect was enhanced by a further display of paintings (especially ancestral portraits), mirrors, arms, clocks, musical instruments, special writing tables, chest and cabinets; by the seventeenth century, a wealthy manor “was already an expanded home, capable of welcoming not only the family, servants and residents, but also guests,” to wit, other members of the “society of neighbors.” The manorhouses, however, paled compared to the residences of the magnates, who in the sixteenth century, “confirmed their social status by rebuilding old, medieval castles into luxurious Renaissance residences,”¹⁴ serving as the very seat of the local social and political life.

Conspicuous consumption was therefore fundamentally competitive, and closely associated with both upward and downward social mobility. While during the transition from the Piast to Jagiellon epochs, class struggle differentiated the *szlachta* as a single class *vis-à-vis* burgers and the peasantry, once the profits from sale of grain shriveled, but Poland-Lithuania’s economy was already based on agriculture and most land held in the hands of the *szlachta*, the inner-gentry competition became the driving force of class formation. Because of the economic decline, only the largest players remained on the market; it was easier for the magnates to weather the crises and their lesser brethren tended to get indebted with them. Consequently, many bankruptcies followed, and the land was being gradually amassed by the magnates. By 1670, 400,000 Polish noblemen, over half of the total, were landless, and the *szlachta* owning parts of villages (*częstkowa*), previously numerous, was virtually extinguished.¹⁵ A century later, most Polish nobles had their land on leases (from large landowners) rather than in hereditary rights.¹⁶ As most property was owned by the magnates, land ownership ceased being the distinctive trait of nobility. Conspicuous consumption became its surrogate. Thus the *szlachta* turned from a “producing class” to a “ruling class.”¹⁷

If one looks at the relative balance of power between the various groups captured in the changing “terms of trade” in Plate Four (a description of how much one could buy for what one sold on the market), then it becomes evident that the most precarious situation was that of the lesser nobles. “Being poor and insecure,” argued Davies, their position was often “worse than that of the serfs. In the eighteenth century, there are many examples of their voluntary submission to serfdom.”¹⁸ Those who did not give up ran even more extensive debts only to maintain the showy *szlachta* lifestyle. All the pauperized gentry had, and all they could bequeath

¹⁴ Bogucka, *The Lost World of the "Sarmatians"*, 91-93.

¹⁵ Davies, *God's Playground*, 229 Jerzy Topolski, *Przełom Gospodarczy W Polsce XVI Wieku I Jego Następstwa [Economic Breakthrough in Early Modern Poland and Its Consequences]*, Czas i Myśl (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2000), 95, 155.

¹⁶ Mączak, “The Structure of Power in the Commonwealth,” 125.

¹⁷ Józef Burszta, *Wieś I Karczma: Rola Karczmy W Życiu Wsi Pańszczyźnianej [The Role of the Country Inn in Manorial Poland]* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1950), 198.

¹⁸ Davies, *God's Playground*, 178.

to their children, was their nobility. But even a bare title had a potential value: it was the entrance ticket to the magnates' estates and courts, where jobs could be found. The formal equality of the noble "brethrens" or "neighbors" became ever more grotesque. In 1739, for example, Stanisław Lubomirski inherited a latifundium of 1,071 landed estates, worked by nearly a million serfs. This made him the largest private land owner in Europe. He had a private army and a court, and his income was higher than of the Polish king.¹⁹

No wonder that petty nobles, desperate and destitute, seemed ridiculous when they insisted that figures like Lubomirski were their equals. The principle of formal equality worked actually to the magnates' advantage. Votes and support of the landless nobles could be bought for a song; and the decentralized political system, now based upon a large crowd of desperate but enfranchised group, further enervated the state power. While in countries like France, pauperized nobles found support with the monarch,²⁰ in Poland-Lithuania this was increasingly impossible. Hence clinging to nobility and hoping to please a magnate was the only way out. This in turn made the class reproduction of many *szlachta* even more grotesque. When forced to settled in the country, for example, they often built walled villages (*zaścianek*) for themselves, to remain aloof from the serfs. When toiling the land, they did not forget to stick a pole in the field, fixed a hat on that pole and required the serfs to bow. Even their meanest hovels had a porch, so the coat of arms could be displayed. Little wonder that, too big for their britches, the *szlachta* became the "laughing-stock of Europe, the butt which every radical wit ... could mock."²¹ For Defoe they represented "the most haughty, imperious, insulting people in the world" precisely because their overweening "vanity of birth" was in dissonance with their empty pockets.²²

The curse of Ham

Status anxiety, therefore, propelled swathes of the middling gentry, poised on a very thin economic tightrope, to look up to their "senior brethrens," and at the same time, as Defoe observed, "trample on the poorer people as dogs."²³ Consequently, petty *szlachta* started harboring racial theories that explained the social composition of Poland, wrote Peter Burke, "in terms of division of labor among the sons of Noah. The descendants of Shem prey, the descendants of Japhet fight, the descendants of Ham work."²⁴ In the entire early modern Europe, "the image of 'race' [was] projected backwards into the past" and "myths were created according to which the aristocracy were descended from ... warlike tribes" such as the Franks in the French and German cases, or Goths in the Spanish one.²⁵ The "curse of Ham" was the leading racial theory of that sort: the European aristocracy was believed to be the

¹⁹ Davies, *Europe*, 585.

²⁰ Maciszewski, *Szlachta Polska I Jej Państwo*, 184-5, 193-4.

²¹ Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 331.

²² Quoted in: Davies, *God's Playground*, 182.

²³ Quoted in: Ibid.

²⁴ in: Patrick Joyce, ed., *Class*, Oxford readers (Oxford: Oxford University, 1995), 293.

²⁵ Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, 70.



5.1

Plate five

The curse of Ham

- 5.1 - Expulsion of Ham by Noah. Nineteenth century painting by Ksenofontov Stepanovitch
- 5.2 - *The Drunkenness of Noah* (1515) by Giovanni Bellini, depicting Ham (center) laughing at his father, while Shem and Japheth cover him



5.2

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descendent of Japheth, the forefather of warriors, and this conviction became so ingrained that even Voltaire took pains in rebuking it as sheer nonsense.²⁶ While basking in their imagined Japhethian past, the *szlachta* believed that the peasants had been condemned (in the Bible) for perennial servitude and physical labor and predestined to become serfs.

Such genealogies were based on a relatively minor story from the Old Testament. In the *Book of Genesis* we learn how one evening, having drunk too much wine, Noah fell asleep naked in his tent. When his sons saw Noah's disgrace, they shunned the sight. Only Ham was not ashamed of looking at his besotted and unclad father. When Noah woke up, he "knew what his youngest son had done unto him," and cursed Ham's son, Canaan, to become the "servants of servants."²⁷ This story reemerged in surprisingly many historical contexts and world locations – whenever social subordination had to be vindicated by Biblical exegesis. Most prominently, the curse of Ham "has been the single greatest justification for Black slavery for more than a thousand years," and was quickly embraced in the New World.²⁸ It also proved handy in explaining in theological terms the Iberian subjugation of Native Americans, or driving the Celts out of Ireland. It was prominent in medieval Italy, and its representation in the Ducal Palace "functioned literally as the cornerstone for the Venetian republic."²⁹ Quite possibly it was via Venice (that Polish Renaissance courts had extensive relations with) that it arrived to Poland.³⁰ Its global career notwithstanding, it was only in Poland-Lithuania, to my knowledge, that the "curse of Ham" had entered the vernacular, and a relatively obscure biblical name evolved into an appellative of *chamstwo* that to this day is quite often used in everyday parlance. Before I return in later chapters to the analysis of *chamstwo*'s urbanization, here I wish to execute its "social etymology,"³¹ because despite its protean nature, it actually works similarly today as it did nearly half a millennium ago.

Noah had three sons, and the "descendants of Shem," the Jews, also lived in Poland-Lithuania. Yet, my argument is that what Peter Burke took for a tripartite estate model, in fact represented a dual class relation. True, Poland eventually became home to four-fifths of world's Jewry (nearly 800,000 souls in the 1790s), but what attracted the Jews to Poland was not economic opportunities but religious tolerance. It was, as one rabbi put it, "better to live on dry bread, but in peace, in Poland."³² Unlike Spain and Western Europe in general, Poland-Lithuania was a "country

²⁶ I owe this point to Chris Hann (personal communication, 15 October 2009).

²⁷ *Genesis* 9:20–25.

²⁸ David M Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the ancient to the modern world (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1.

²⁹ Werner Sollors, "The Curse of Ham; or From "Generation" to "Race"," in *Neither Black nor White yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 86.

³⁰ see also: Tadeusz Ulewicz, "Polish Humanism and its Italian Sources: Beginnings and Historical Development," in *The Polish Renaissance in Its European Context*, ed. Samuel Fiszman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 215-235.

³¹ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 35.

³² quoted in: Davies, *God's Playground*, 240.

without stakes,” where religious tolerance was guaranteed in law. The Jews lived on the fringe of the Polish society, however, and were not involved in the grain business. The other two “estates,” represented a racialized class position relative to their role in the production of cash-crops. The pure labor force was relegated to Ham’s stock, whereas those who ripped the benefits of the manorial production, the *szlachta*, were mythologized as their perennial guardians. Of course one has to bear in mind that a “dual society” (here composed of the *chamstwo*, i.e. serfs, and the *państwo*, i.e. their overlords) is only the very horizon of class struggle – a hypothetical condition, when permeability of social boundaries is wholly reduced.³³ Racialization of class boundaries certainly contributed to that, but, as we will see, the turning of peasants, burgers and even déclassé nobles into serfs, and inhabiting the process of upward social mobility, to wit, the making of *chamstwo*, was a long and a bumpy process.

Just as during the Piast prosperity, the *szlachta* was relatively generous in granting the noble title to newcomers, as the grain conjuncture weakened nobles started protecting their class integrity. Throughout the sixteenth century the *szlachta* became gradually “a closed, hereditary estate” and once this had been achieved, “all means of access to it were jealously guarded.”³⁴ The trouble was that there was no “authoritative institution where records of ennoblement and entitlement were kept for public reference.” If somebody’s title to nobility was challenged, he had to undergo a “test of nobility,” and produce six sworn witnesses to confirm his descent. The political organization into “neighborhoods,” and protection from a magnate, was sometimes helpful: “by attaching himself to a public association of known persons, a nobleman could save himself from malicious insinuations.”³⁵ Those, it seems, became ever fiercer, as the downward mobility intensified. To be sure, on the whole European continent the flow of “parvenu blood [into] in the ranks of the gentry was enough to arouse condemnation” and many authors poured scorn on the new rich.³⁶ Very few, however, matched the zeal of the Polish defendant of nobles’ racial purity, Walerian Nekanda Trepka (1585-1640).

Trepka was “a cuss and a crank of the most tiresome kind,” a litigant and a brawler, who travelled from one fair and local diet to another, and collected information and gossip about peasants, burgers and Jews who could be falsely parading as nobles.³⁷ Soured after the loss of his own estate, Trepka composed a thick dossier, named *Liber Chamorum* (1624-1639), a Book of Hams, wherein he exposed men, from Abramowicz to Żyznański, who, in his view, “screwed their way” into nobility by marriage, bribery or stratagem. While in the American “localization” of the curse of Ham, the emphasis lay on the fact Ham’s progeny (i.e. the Blacks) had to perform unpaid manual labor, in the Polish case the crucial detail was different. The original

³³ Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*, Studies in Marxism and social theory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chap. 5.

³⁴ Davies, *God's Playground*, 183.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁶ Kamen, *Early Modern European Society*, 105.

³⁷ Davies, *God's Playground*, 181.

curse was meted out not to Ham, but to his innocent son. Ham's transgression was penalized by him being disallowed to leave inheritance; his children became serfs as result of that. We see this clearly from a close reading of *Liber Chamorum*. Since Trepka was an "ardent collector of insults and stinging remarks,"³⁸ he would have used the derogative word *cham* if he knew it. But he did not. Trepka's widely circulated work became known as *Liber Chamorum* only after it had been rewritten seventy years later by an unidentified copyist. Only in the so-called "Lvov copy" did the word *cham* appear. It did eight times, each time as a replacement of the word "son." Instead of "peasant son" featuring next to a surname in Trepka's original, therefore, the Lvov copist wrote down "peasant *cham*." This was precisely the very moment when family was becoming an accumulation unit and surnames started being used as marks of individual hereditary rights.³⁹ The curse of Ham was hence a ban on heritability. To argue that so-and-so was a peasant or burger *cham* was to say that he did not have the right to inherit his father's property, and hence their family could not turn into an accumulation unit and had to start working in order to live.

It is worth noting that at this point a *cham* could be anybody that was either of peasant, burger or Jewish decent, and who claimed rights to a noble status.⁴⁰ *Liber Chamorum* was a list of those who ought to be called, instead of the noble surname they claimed, a group of *chams*, that is: *chamstwo*. Not surprisingly then, Trepka brooked no intra-class marriages, writing: "for what purity can come from such impurity, what perfume from such a stench!"⁴¹ Also, as expected, he castigated ennoblement. The King, he argued, "may offer a village but he cannot recreate, for he is not God. He would have to put the man back into the mother's womb."⁴² Such wardens of class purity were in the forefront of the racialization of social boundaries. Some people were stigmatized for generations to come: surnames such as Chamski, Chamerski, Chamała and so forth were commonplace in Poland-Lithuania. Explaining the curse of Ham in terms of divine providence survived well into the nineteenth and even mid twentieth centuries. One of the key characters in Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy*, for example, asked rhetorically: "what's wrong with [serfs] working on their master's acres, anyway? Is it our fault that God created us gentry and them as our peasants (*chamy*)?"⁴³ The gentry believed their bodies contained traces of gold, and that blood of a distinctive color ran through their veins. Often in their rhetoric, Polish nobles liked themselves to "the Cedars of Lebanon, taller and fairer than everyone else;"⁴⁴ in practice their physique came closer to that of

³⁸ Józef Matuszewski, *Cham* (Łódź: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1991), 77.

³⁹ Józef Matuszewski, *Cham [The Ham]* (Łódź: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1991), 241-243.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 78-94.

⁴¹ in: Davies, *God's Playground*, 233.

⁴² Bogucka, *The Lost World of the "Sarmatians"*, 24.

⁴³ Henryk Sienkiewicz, *With Fire and Sword* (New York: Copernicus society of America, 1991), 942.

⁴⁴ Davies, *God's Playground*, 234.

Sienkiewicz's character quoted above, "a lying tub of lard," resembling closely Shakespearian Falstaff.⁴⁵

As the cash-crops economy continued its regress, the serfs, malnourished and overworked, indeed increasingly resembled a "different race," sallow, skinny and sluggish in movement (the prime "weapon of the weak" of those performing unpaid labor), as well, the gentry claimed, slow in mind.⁴⁶ *Chamstwo* became synonymous with ignorance of etiquette, innate obtuseness and utter savagery. Treated as brutes, serfs indeed became such. In 1764, a French traveler reported with horror that "penury of the serfs is beyond description. They sleep on straw together with the cattle, and their slovenliness has become legendary."⁴⁷ A Book of Hams was no longer necessary – now it was very easy to single out *chamstwo* from the nobles. In the times of Trepka, this was not yet that straightforward; hence he offered extensive clues for discovering fake nobles. A *cham*, he insisted, could be recognized by his incompetence in the *szlachta* ways of life. Certain Pińczowski, Trepka denounced, was a "*plebeus*, for both his complexion and his habits are unlike those of a nobleman." Further: "he spoke with a Mazovian lisp like a peasant and blabbered about his noble birth; if someone, wishing to flatter him, addressed him as a nobleman, he would carelessly regale him with wine. And so others, wanting to drink free wine ... would flatter him and call him nobleman." Education, apart from polished manners and the knowledge of *szlachta* mores, was an important mark of nobility; certain Bronicki, continued Trepka, "was an idiot who could neither read or write, an ordinary peasant."⁴⁸ To be sure, illiteracy was widespread among the Polish nobles too, but that was not held against them. What constituted the very "core" of the *szlachta* identity was their "warrior code," allegedly inherited from the biblical Japheth. Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy* is precisely such a nostalgic praise of the *szlachta*'s chivalry. This is how the Polish Falstaff slurred the *chamstwo* that stirred an anti-gentry revolt on the Ukrainian frontier: "there's a lion in me, as you know, and I don't understand the meaning of fear, but I'd be glad if lightning would strike that human ant-heap before dawn ... Wouldn't every mother's son among them be better off at home? ... They've had it too easy with us, that's what was the matter. They've been fed too well so they've been breeding like mice in a grain-loft and now they think they can go after the cats. Just you wait, you vermin!"⁴⁹

Accumulation by addiction

In reality, of course, cats were much more often after mice rather than the other way around. Killing a serf was no crime, and the *szlachta* was generally known for being

⁴⁵ Kenneth McLeish, *Longman Guide to Shakespeare's Characters: A Who's Who of Shakespeare* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1985), 87; the parallel between Zagłoba and Falstaff is Czesław Miłosz's, see: Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 309.

⁴⁶ Baranowski, *Kultura Ludowa XVII I XVIII W. Na Ziemiach Polski Środkowej*, 462-463.

⁴⁷ in: *Ibid.*, 209.

⁴⁸ Bogucka, *The Lost World of the "Sarmatians"*, 26.

⁴⁹ Sienkiewicz, *With Fire and Sword*, 942-943.

keen on applying scourge to their subordinates' backs.⁵⁰ Although Sienkiewicz's "easy beauty" effectively blotted out the cruelty of the Jagiellon epoch, it was well recorded in the peasant folklore.⁵¹ There was an elective affinity between economic decline, rigidification of class boundaries, escalation of class violence, Counterreformation, spread of the "curse of Ham" and advent of the cult of Isidore the Laborer (canonized in 1622), used by the clergy and gentry alike to convince peasants that physical labor was the activity prescribed to them by God.⁵² Abrogation of religious tolerance followed. As Bohdan Baranowski argued, there was a clear class agenda in the prosecution of witchcraft: only women of either peasant or burger background were being prosecuted.⁵³ Some nobles even gained supralocal reputation for their heinous activities. Marcin Mikołaj Radziwiłł (1705-1780), for example, was particularly notorious. Except for beating up serfs, he was also said to have hanged an innocent man seeking to ingratiate himself to the magnate. The poor man kept following Radziwiłł so he could remain in his "field of vision" (*na widoku*). When passing the sentence, Radziwiłł commented wryly: "now thou shall always be in my field of vision."⁵⁴

Sheer violence, however, was insufficient for a full racialization of class boundaries; there were also non-coercive mechanisms of class formation at work.⁵⁵ Struggle for the local market continued, or even intensified, as the Dutch merchants no longer bought the Polish grain. Despite hardships, serfs sought to find loopholes in the grain-based economy, and retain a modicum of independence. The ruin of towns reached its nadir during the wars with Sweden in 1655-1660 and 1700-21; they left Polish towns destroyed in 80 to 90 per cent and urban population reduced by 60 to 70 per cent.⁵⁶ Paired with externalization of production costs onto the serfs, this led to veritable ruralization of towns and deurbanization of manufacture. Peasants no longer bought tools, but had to make them. Technological regress followed: iron plows, commonplace in the sixteenth century, were being gradually replaced by wooden ones.⁵⁷ But this became an opportunity: in the Łódź region, for example, small-scale tool workshops, ran by village smiths, mushroomed. Also, wool and textiles, that had remained outside of the Vistula grain-based economy, were a source of extra income, and, despite many efforts, the gentry did not succeed in ousting the peasants from that market. Especially in the vicinity of Krakow, as I will discuss presently, a thriving linen-manufacturing region, ran exclusively by entrepreneurial serfs, emerged. In the Łódź region, buckwheat cultivation was particularly popular with peasants. Serfs cultivated it, processed into kasha, and organized its export. All these efforts did not change their overall position, and

⁵⁰ Bohdan Baranowski, *Życie Codzienne Wsi Między Wartą a Pilicą W XIX Wieku* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1969), 132-133.

⁵¹ Bohdan Baranowski, *W Kręgu Upiorów I Wilkołaków* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1981), 278-282.

⁵² Janusz Tazbir, *Studia Nad Kulturą Staropolską* (Kraków: Universitas, 2001), chap. 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁴ Janusz Tazbir, *Okrucieństwo W Nowożytnej Europie* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), 164.

⁵⁵ I owe this point to Sidney Mintz (personal communication, 26 June 2009).

⁵⁶ Bogucka, "Polish towns between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries," 140, see also: Robert I Frost, *After the Deluge: Poland-Lithuania and the Second Northern War, 1655-1660* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁵⁷ Maciszewski, *Szlachta Polska I Jej Państwo*, 103.

represented “hand-to-mouth prosperity” (*tyle zysku co w pysku*), as a common phase had it, but nevertheless helped serfs to keep their heads above water.⁵⁸

The nobles came up with an even more ingenious “innovation” for the ailing economy. Instead selling grain to the Dutch, they started processing it into vodka, and had peasants buy it. This is how, one magnate remarked, “vodka distilleries could be called mints, because it is only thanks to them that we can hope to sell grain in the years when there is no famine.”⁵⁹ 1766 the *szlachta* legalized their previously informal privilege of monopoly over the production and sale of vodka – the so-called *propinacja*.⁶⁰ By then, share of income derived from *propinacja* rose sharply: from 0.3% of total (in 1564) through 6.4% (in 1661) to 40.1% in 1786.⁶¹ Now the Jews were incorporated into the Jagiellon economy (as tavern keepers), and, as one noble put it, “without his own Jew, a squire is nowadays what he used to be without a sword – a mock-nobleman.”⁶² The *szlachta* employed their political monopoly and legal instruments to force peasants into buying vodka. Each serf family was obliged by law to consume a certain quantity of vodka per annum. Often, purchasing vodka was a punishment for criminal offence dispensed by overlords. Drinking was swiftly weaved into everyday life and social custom: the so-called *litkup* held that every contract was null and void unless the two parties involved consumed together (and had witnesses) certain quantity of vodka.⁶³ Legal coercion, however, was only the beginnings of this new chapter in the Jagiellon accumulation by dispossession (see Chapter Two).

In the eighteenth century, vodka became the prime re-urbanizing instrument. When the town of Bielżyce, for example, burned down in 1780, its main square was rebuilt within a year, and now accommodated inns, taverns and stables for guests.⁶⁴ Despite their allegedly “non-capitalist mindset” the *szlachta* proved very entrepreneurial in establishing taverns, both in villages and towns, and put considerable efforts into cajoling serfs owned by their “neighbors” into frequenting their own taverns, although, according to the laws of *propinacja*, serfs were obliged to buy vodka only from their legal masters. As producers (of grain) serfs were trampled upon, and were not even considered human. But as consumers (of grain processed into vodka) they were accommodated for, because the more they consumed the richer the tavern owner became.⁶⁵ Hence, serfs were, as the anthropologist Józef Burszta put it, gradually “nurtured into addiction,” also because alcohol seems to have provided the perfect consolation for their

⁵⁸ Baranowski, *Kultura Ludowa XVII I XVIII W. Na Ziemiach Polski Środkowej*, 33, 36-39.

⁵⁹ quoted in: Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System*, 137.

⁶⁰ Burszta, *Wieś I Karczma*, 58-65.

⁶¹ Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System*, 134.

⁶² in: Matuszewski, *Cham*, 110ff, see also: See: Murray Jay Rosman, *The Lords' Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth During the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1991), Gershon David Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century: A Genealogy of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

⁶³ Burszta, *Wieś I Karczma*, 90-91.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 200-201.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

increasingly wretched existence.⁶⁶ Oppressed during their workday (by the end of the eighteenth century, serfs' labor dues increased to six days a week on average)⁶⁷ it was only in the tavern where they could exercise their limited subjectivity. Hence, the popular phrase: "I possess only what I spend on drink (*tylkoć też tyle mojego, co przepiję*)."⁶⁸

This further strengthened the autarky of the Jagiellon economy. It was almost a *perpetuum mobile*: peasants were swiftly drained of all cash they obtained on the market (e.g. by selling buckwheat or flax). "Small sums, once placed in this circulating mechanism," wrote Kula, "could theoretically save the same purpose without end, provided, of course, that the estate remained isolated economically."⁶⁹ Rationality behind this "accumulation by addiction" was perverse, however. The more wretched the serfs become, the deeper they sunk into vodka consumption, and the poorer they became. "In Poland the sun rises," a Western observer noted in the early nineteenth century, "only for one purpose: to show the serfs the way to the tavern." It was not uncommon that vodka constituted serfs' main source of nutrition. "Sometimes serfs barely kept straight while toiling the land," he observed, and this led to the "paralysis of their mental and physical capabilities."⁷⁰

Accumulation by addiction is the perfect example of the key role played in the class formation by what Sidney Mintz once called "drug foods." Tobacco, sugar and tea were among "the first objects within capitalism that conveyed with their use the complex idea that one could *become* different by *consuming* differently." The spread of these "drug foods," Mintz argued, was "closely connected to England's fundamental transformation from a hierarchical, status-based, medieval society to a socio-democratic, capitalist, and industrial" one.⁷¹ Likewise, inculcation of drinking practices in serfs closed the process of racialization of class – just as for Trepka peasant sons might have been stupid, ugly, or uncouth, they were nonetheless human. Accumulation by addiction pushed them beyond the borders of humanity.

Such were the sorry outcomes of what were in fact relatively merry beginnings. Drinking initially used to be the hallmark of *szlachta*'s class culture and an important component of their competitive conspicuous consumption practices. Already in the fifteenth century "Poland was muddled with drunkenness," to such a degree that, as in one of Kochanowski's epigrams, a foreign visitor went to bed sober and woke up drunk. Drinking was an integral part of the *szlachta* political culture. "If you want to have pull with people," a popular phrase run, "then show them how you can drink" (*chcesz coś znaczyć u ludzi, pokaż jak umiesz pić*). Remember the poor peasant mocked by Trepka for buying rounds to those who called him a noble? Alcohol functioned as status leveler. What bonded the *szlachta*

⁶⁶ Ibid., 105.

⁶⁷ Kochanowicz, "The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe," 107.

⁶⁸ In: Burszta, *Wieś I Karczma*, 19.

⁶⁹ Kula, *An Economic Theory of the Feudal System*, 144.

⁷⁰ In: Burszta, *Wieś I Karczma*, 108.

⁷¹ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 185.

brethrens of different economic standing was precisely the fact that they drunk together. And they did not drink with their inferiors – there is another fifteenth century epigram wherein Kochanowski lamented that peasants no longer drunk mead with nobles. Magnates, in order to conduct effective political action, mobilized the crowds of pauperized *szlachta* precisely through funding feasts with abundant alcoholic beverages. It is possible that peasants were soon called *chamstwo* also because, just like the biblical Ham was punished for witnessing his father inebriation, they too happened to participate (as servants, or simply onlookers) in festivities that turned out, on the next morning, embarrassing, and hence incurred their superior's anger or even revenge. It is also possible that because the serfs had been previously excluded from drinking, they experienced the eventual "invitation" to consume vodka as a form of "ennoblement," and hence installing addiction occurred more swiftly. Of course, the fact that now both nobles and serfs drunk did not mean they became equals. Instead, as Burszta soberly reminded, the two groups, being separate races, developed two distinct "drinking styles:" convivial and consolatory. These were, of course, related: the *szlachta* was free to drink "out of whim" precisely because the serfs "had to drink."⁷²

Class origins of industrial urbanization

Poland's Jagiellon Manchester

Such a "curious" *perpetum mobile* could have perhaps subsisted on the fringe of the world economy, had not for the changing world-systematic conjuncture. By 1800 Poland-Lithuania's "extensive" neighbors divided its territory, and the nobles' Commonwealth perished. Their merchant feudalism, however, did not. It continued its existence, and, as I will discuss below, the economic policies undertaken in the nineteenth century only exacerbated the domination of agriculture and of the large land owners (*ziemiaństwo*). The most burning social problem of the interwar Poland, the overpopulated countryside teeming with unskilled youth, was actually an outcome of the fossilization of the feudal economy that occurred between 1830 and 1864.⁷³ Anti-urban propaganda, as the reader will see, as well as new material investments, such as the building of family housing (*czworaki*) for landless agricultural laborers, were the main strategies aimed at keeping peasants moored to the countryside.⁷⁴ Until 1939, Poland remained a fundamentally agricultural society, with less than one-third of its population living in cities. This was, actually, nearly the same level as in the mid sixteenth century (30 per cent in 1939 and 28 per cent in 1578), before Poland's urban decline begun in earnest. In fact, the 1939 urbanization index represented a considerable rise (by 10 per cent) as compared to what it used to be in 1842.⁷⁵

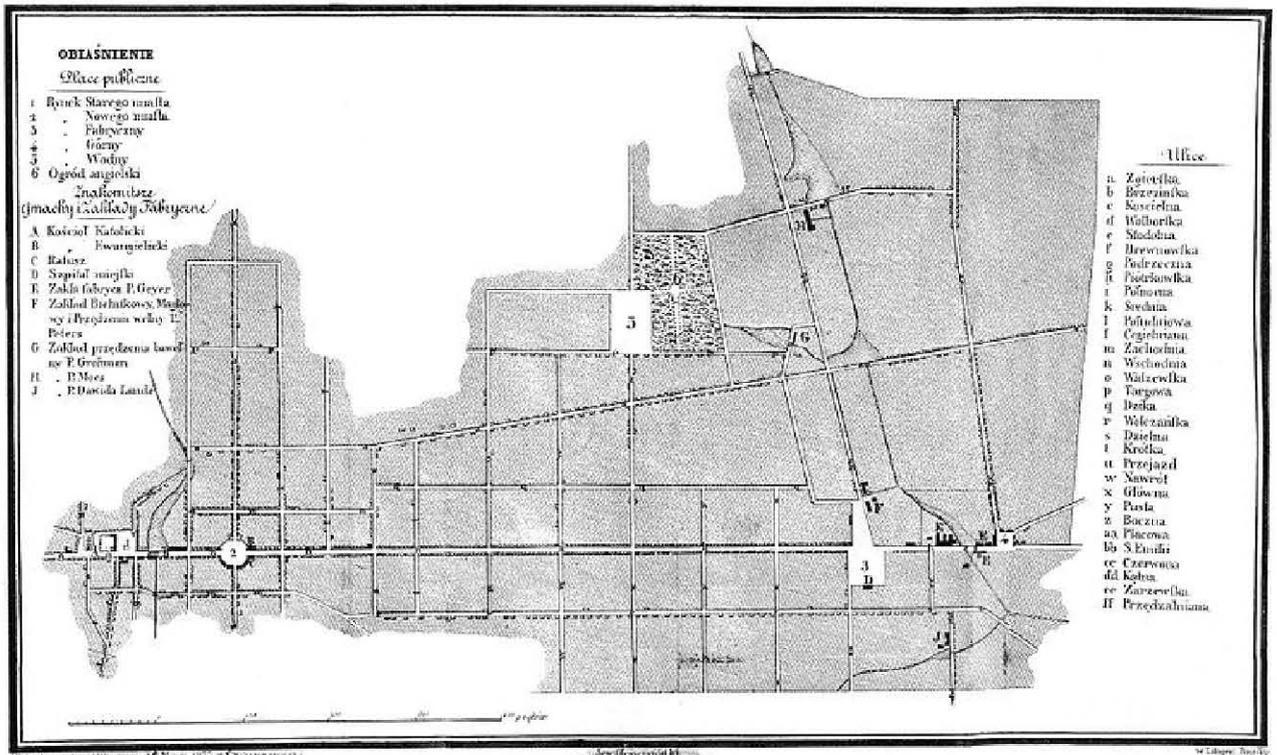
⁷² Burszta, *Wieś i Karczma*, 14.

⁷³ Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim*, 417.

⁷⁴ Baranowski, *Życie Codzienne Wsi Między Wartą a Pilicą W XIX Wieku*, 15-19

⁷⁵ Grzegorz Węclawowicz, *Geografia Społeczna Miast: Zróżnicowania Społeczno-Przestrzenne* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Naukowe PWN, 2003), 125, Hanna Imbs, "Miasta w kulturze polski doby

PLAN MIASTA ŁÓDZI



nach Oskar Flatt, 'Beschreibung der Stadt Łódź',
 Warszawa 1853, reproduziert im Maßstab 1:20000

1853

Legend:

- Helghaus
- Steinhaus

Erklärung: Öffentliche Plätze: 1. Alter Ring 2. Neuer Ring 3. Fabrikring
 4. Hoher Ring 5. Wasserberg 6. Englischer Garten

Bedeutendere Gebäude und Fabrikanlagen:
 A. Katholische Kirche B. Evangelische Kirche C. Rathaus D. Städtisches Spital
 E. Fabrik Geyer F. Bleiche, Mangel und Wollspinnerei Peters G. Baumwollspinnerei Crehmann
 H. Baumwollspinnerei Moeis I. Baumwollspinnerei David Lande

Plate six Łódź in 1853. A map printed in Łódź's first description prepared by Oskar Flatt

Source: Wikipedia

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Nineteenth century industrial urbanization, therefore, has to be understood as a “catching up” after centuries of urban regress; a catching up that was checked by the extant power structures anchored in land. My argument in the remaining part of this chapter is that the very fact that Poland’s Manchester rose in Łódź, i.e. close to Warsaw and in one of Poland’s most heavily “manorialized” areas, and did not in Andrychów, a budding textile manufacturing region close to Krakow and Poland’s cloth center since the Piast times, attests to the fundamentally Jagiellon nature of Poland’s nineteenth century industrial urbanization. Of course Łódź was a continuation of the Jagiellon space only in terms of class – materially and technologically, it was its most spectacular negation. The fact that Łódź was tightly enveloped by the Jagiellon class relations proved highly significant for the post-war trajectory of that city, as the reader will discover in Part Three of this study.

The comparison between Łódź and Andrychów poses one difficulty. The two towns and their environs were part of different polities: the Russian and the Habsburg Empires. The fact that Łódź was opened to the “absorptive” Russian markets, and Andrychów was not, was an important factor that worked in Łódź’s favor. As I argued in Chapter Two with regard to the different trajectories of European states in the sixteenth century class-formation process, only a combination of external and internal factors can fully explain divergent spatial trajectories. Of course one can always dispute the relative weight of the exogenous and endogenous factors. Andrychów and Łódź, except for the obvious external differences, were also markedly different internally. That difference boiled down to the relative position of the peasantry. The Łódź region was actually by no means a “coherent” territorial unit. Rather, it was a “shatter zone” between two core regions of the Piast space, the Greater Poland and Mazovia. Its northern part, precisely the one where between 1820s and 1840s a textile production started emerging, had been heavily “manorialized,” mainly because it was littoral to the Vistula.⁷⁶ Export-led grain production arrived there relatively late, in the second part of the seventeenth century, but it did so in its most extreme incarnation, i.e. coupled with counterreformation. Most manorial estates in that area were of the small or at best middling size; its *szlachta* was notorious for obscurantism, religious fanaticism and brutality towards their serfs.⁷⁷ The policy of land takeovers and peasant evictions commencing in 1807 was particularly severe there too. By 1859, only 20 per cent of arable land in that region was held by peasants, and landless peasants constituted 46 per cent of the total.⁷⁸ This was why textile manufacturing flourished in the north, and not in the south of the Łódź region, where peasant smallholding was more widespread and the *szlachta* property scattered rather than consolidated.⁷⁹ Class

przemysłowej,” in *Miasto i Kultura Polska Doby Przemysłowej: Przestrzeń*, ed. Hanna Imbs (Wrocław ; Kraków [etc.]: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988), 77-106.

⁷⁶ Jan Fijałek and Ryszard Rosin, eds., *Łódź: Dzieje Miasta* (Warszawa: PWN, 1980), 142.

⁷⁷ Zajączkowski Marian, “Początki folwarku w ziemiach łęczyckiej i sieradzkiej” *Rocznik Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* 31 (1970): 1-43.

⁷⁸ Baranowski, *Życie Codzienne Wsi Między Wartą a Pilicą W XIX Wieku*, 5, 9, 12, 39.

⁷⁹ Gryzelda Miszałowa, *Studia Nad Powstaniem Łódzkiego Okręgu Przemysłowego 1815-1870. Przemysł* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1964), 101-102.

relations in Andrychów were, therefore, similar to ones in the south of the Łódź region, and that similarity informs my comparison.

The relative strength of classes in the two regions was well visible in the collective action they pursued. In 1830 and 1864, two gentry-led insurrections broke out in the Polish Kingdom (semi-autonomous part of the Russian Empire, administered from Warsaw), whereas in the Habsburg Galicia, the most spectacular collective action was the peasant *jacquerie* unleashed in 1846. Marauding serf bands slaughtered over 1,100 nobles, and in some areas razed to the ground nine of out ten manors. “This was the greatest moral failure of Polish [noble] democracy. The common people – despite the great myth of the romantics and the revolutionary intelligentsia – did not reciprocate the love extended to them.”⁸⁰ It took the Habsburg army over three weeks to restore peace. When its echoes reached (coming from the south) the Polish Kingdom, Tsar’s troops quelled it immediately, thereby saving Polish nobles from serf revanchism.⁸¹ It was in Galicja where a strong peasant political movement emerged in the nineteenth century (Polish peasants even became members of the Austro-Hungarian parliament),⁸² and where a truly extraordinary region of serf-run textile manufacturing existed between the mid-seventeenth and the early twentieth century. It was the relative weakness of the state apparatus and nobles in Galicia that allowed for that to happen.

The activity of the Polish Kingdom’s government (dominated by the landed nobles) was the main motor behind the rise of Łódź as Poland’s Manchester. Poland-Lithuania’s debacle quickly became the stimulus to the formation of a “reformist” camp within the Polish elites, and Kingdom’s high offices soon were staffed by such-minded people. Although the Kingdom’s economy was growing increasingly obsolete, Jerzy Jedlicki argued, its elite’s knowledge of the Western industrialization was state-of-the-art. The advent of Manchester provoked “admiration and distaste simultaneously: admiration for its economic development and distaste for its social effects.”⁸³ A leading economist, Fryderyk Skarbek, wrote in 1825: “I shall never be able to reconcile myself with the idea that a nation can call itself rich while a major part of its population lives in poverty and destitution ... What use is this enormous wealth, which itself does not know its own magnitude, if the people does not have enough bread for its needs; if a major part of the people, like the first inhabitants of the steppes, must wander about the country like nomads in search of employment with rich capitalists.”⁸⁴ Hence, their demand of “energetic Europeanization of Polish life” did not entail reproducing the English model. “When it came to pushing the peasantry from ... feudal destitution to proletarian

⁸⁰ Jerzy Jedlicki, “Holy ideals and prosaic life, or the devil's alternatives,” in *Polish Paradoxes*, ed. Stanislaw Gomulka and Antony Polonsky (London: Routledge, 1991), 51.

⁸¹ Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim*, 418-419.

⁸² Davies, *God's Playground*, 148; for the rise of peasant movement, see: Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1914* (Ithaca, [N.Y.]: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁸³ Jerzy Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe: Nineteenth-Century Polish Approaches to Western Civilization* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 75.

⁸⁴Ibid., 76-77.

destitution,” argued Jedlicki, “and when it meant using the slogan of historic ‘progress’ to disguise this step, they balked.”⁸⁵ Instead, they envisioned an alternative path. According to Skarbek, “the premature influx of capital to industry and commerce before agriculture had a chance to attain a higher degree of perfection,” was a drastic example of an “inverted order.” Hence, “towns, factories, and manufacturing industries ... are of secondary importance for Poles... A well-ruled country is a country in which the government tries to increase the number of the owners of land, and in which the peasant has a chance to amass capital.”⁸⁶

Such an agenda did not call for “Polish Manchesters or Birminghams, but workshops and small factories scattered throughout the country, requiring more labor than capital, since the masses of village laborers had to be given bread and employment.”⁸⁷ Such generous ideas, however, was hardly borne out by practices. In 1807 serfs gained personal independence (from Napoleon Bonaparte), so they were free to move; but they still had no titles to land. Thus, they had their shackles, as Baranowski noted, “removed together with their shoes.”⁸⁸ Feudal paternalism was abrogated, but no chances to amass capital emerged. This “transitional” system between feudalism and industrial capitalism, in place between 1815 and 1864, “combined the worst elements” of both.⁸⁹ Now when a serf family was to reach the rock bottom, their squire no longer felt compelled to help them out. As serfdom was now regarded as a “contract,” nobles could easily confiscate the land of bankrupt serfs. One high official put it bluntly in 1822: “free movement of peasants gives us a double advantage: first, families—that we can now dispose of— will file no claims on the domiciles they have resided in for centuries, and second the more vagabonds the more farmhands (*parobek*) and the more profit for our estates.”⁹⁰

Although the enlightened reformers kept discussing land reform, it was being constantly postponed; serfdom was abolished, in the end, in 1864 by the Tsar, as the means to ensure serfs would not support the *szlachta* uprising – and duly they did not. Discontents with English urbanization, the fear of urban proletariat – “dangerous in its penury and utter desperation,” – eventually entrenched the economy based upon land, and the nobles made extensive efforts to funnel the proletarianized serfs into their agricultural estates rather than to cities.⁹¹ The rather modest *szlachta* ventures into manufacturing in the first half of the nineteenth century were essentially a continuation of the old “import substitution” model.⁹² It is therefore ironic that real chances for serfs to “amass capital” emerged not in the “progressive” Polish Kingdom, but rather in the “backward” Habsburg-administered Galicja.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 76.

⁸⁶ quoted in: Ibid., 80.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 281-282.

⁸⁸ Baranowski, *Życie Codzienne Wsi Między Wartą a Pilicą W XIX Wieku*, 9.

⁸⁹ Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim*, 69.

⁹⁰ Gryzelda Missalowa, *Studia Nad Powstaniem Łódzkiego Okręgu Przemysłowego 1815-1870*.

Przemysł [The Genesis of the Lodz Industrial Area: the Industry] (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1964), 25ff.

⁹¹ Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim*, 75, 391, 399.

⁹² Ibid., 478.

The rise and fall of the serf bourgeoisie

While in the Piast epoch, Krakow was indeed an international emporium, by the eighteenth century its importance was at best regional. In the sixteenth century, at Krakow's Cloth Hall (*Sukiennice*) one could buy Flemish, English, Turkish and central European textiles. Yet, Krakow was increasingly trading in domestic cloth – that of finer quality produced by artisans in Silesia, and Greater Poland, and coarser linen produced locally and mainly used for canvas. By the 1770s four-fifths of Poland's textile demand was satisfied by the cloth produced in Greater Poland. Krakow, by then, was trading mainly in linen produced in the nearby Andrychów region. For centuries, despite the reorientation of trading routes from land to river, Krakow merchant families managed to retain their strategic foothold in the textile market; gradually the Andrychów serfs, who organized the sale of their cloth to Holland, Germany, Hungary, Moldavia and Walachia by dealing directly with the Gdańsk merchants, took over the cloth trade.⁹³ These frequently illiterate entrepreneurs organized a putting-out system in which thousands of families were involved, maintained business relations with remote distances, and often made truly spectacular fortunes.

The fate of the “serf bourgeoisie” in Andrychów is a telling example of how the deep-seated curse of Ham demarcated the very limits of class mobility in Poland. Although the Andrychów linen manufacturing region flourished for over one and a half centuries, the entrepreneurial serfs never turned “organically” into a local bourgeoisie. Mariusz Kulczykowski, who studied the phenomenon extensively and brilliantly, found *no single* incident of a serf entrepreneur passing his business onto his children. Even the most amazing careers in Andrychów lasted only for one generation. Although they understood well the value of capital, and knew that money can breed more money (village bankers were held in high esteem as “industrious and trustworthy,” and serfs placed nearly all their profits with them), they did not know how to turn their family into an accumulation unit. “Bourgeois serfs” remained personally dependent on their squires, and merchants, for example, who had to frequently travel far distances, had to ask their lords for permission. They rented land from the *szlachta* to cultivate flax, but never even considered “paying for freedom,” and becoming independent. If they migrated to towns, then abandoned textiles and moved over to other businesses. Andrychów serfs put money into posthumous conspicuous consumption rather than into accumulation. Typically, testaments of most successful serf entrepreneurs held that 70 per cent of their wealth was escheated to the Catholic Church (many of Krakow's churches were built thanks to these donations), further 20 per cent was spent on a sumptuous funeral, and only 10 per cent was bequeathed to the family.⁹⁴

⁹³ Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland*, 294-295.

⁹⁴ Mariusz Jan Kulczykowski, *Chłopskie Tkactwo Bawelniane W Ośrodku Andrychowskim W XIX Wieku* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1976), 41-48, 150-154.

There was an important spatial aspect to that enduring curse of Ham. Once, following urban decline, manufacture had been deeply ruralized, commodity production became tightly intertwined with agriculture. The separation of tasks, and especially that of bleaching and dying from spinning and weaving, the hallmark of modern textile manufacturing, was impossible to achieve in Andrychów. Usually such separation of tasks was spatialized, and constituted an important element of the country-town dichotomy. Strength of the serf-ran business impeded reurbanization of manufacture. The town of Andrychów, founded in 1767 clearly as an outcome of the prosperity of the local linen economy, was surrounded *from all the sides* by a manorial village of Andrychów. Bitter feuds between Andrychów urbanites and Andrychów villagers commenced, but because of the spatial dread-lock, these were never resolved in favor of either party. There was, therefore, no way in which Andrychów-the-town could have subjugated its surrounding countryside and turned into Poland's Manchester. It was only after it became the host of a swelling Jewish community in the 1830s, that the town gradually became the organizational center of production. Bleaching of linen was a technologically complicated endeavor, requiring access to water and relatively large land, and was performed by the elite of the serf bourgeoisie. The Jewish merchants, by importing cotton (superior from consumer's point of view) that had been already bleached or even dyed, hit the very top of the linen-producing pyramid, and the entire structure gradually tumbled. The Jews eventually turned Andrychów-the-town into a center of dying and the heart of a cotton-based putting out system.⁹⁵ It could hardly, however, compete with the mechanized cotton mills in Łódź. By the early twentieth century, Andrychów's textile production was barely surviving, mainly thanks to the resourcefulness of the peasant retails firm (*kolegacje*) whose peddlers, against the grain of declining quality of production and profitability, travelled ever farther distances, reaching even the most isolated corners of the Ukraine and the Balkans, where the least demanding textile consumers could still be found.⁹⁶

A city of three nations

The conservative attitude of the Polish Kingdom's officials towards industrialization can be observed in the fact that they did not build their textile industry on state-of-the art steam-based technology but fetched in German and Czech handloom weavers, who in their home countries were at the time being crowded out by power-looms. Despite the declining demand for textile artisans in the West, the weavers were not very eager to settle in the Polish Kingdom; they feared that in Poland "one can be only either a slave or a lord." Indeed, there is evidence that private town owners attempted to burden new settlers with unpaid labor dues, but the government quickly guaranteed their independence in law.⁹⁷ The settlers' arrivals must have been a true spectacle, and this is how this "strange procession of vehicles, people, animals and objects" was described in *The Brothers Ashkenazi*, a novel on Łódź written in Yiddish by Israel Joshua Singer (brother of

⁹⁵ Ibid., 57-66.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 143-145.

⁹⁷ Missalowa, *Studia Vol. I*, 63, 85, 91.

the Nobel Prize winner) in the late 1930s: the “sturdier wagons contained fat, pipe-smoking men, clean-shaven in front but with beards dangling behind their chins.” The women “wore bonnets and clogs over red woolen stockings. The wagons were loaded with bedding, clothes, copperplates of kings and battles, Bibles and prayer books, crates of squawking fowl and rabbits scurrying in the hay. Fat, heavy-uddered cows brought up the rear.” The less imposing vehicles, “were ribbed and canopied like gypsy wagons. There were carts drawn by big dogs and even by man-and-woman teams while children pushed behind.”⁹⁸

What awaited them were the carefully-drafted towns, planned according to the Enlightenment principles.⁹⁹ Łódź, for example, was divided into right-angle plots, and was initially slated for hosting a community of a maximum of 20,000 weavers and spinners. Already between 1824 and 1828 Polish Kingdom’s government decided to regulate the growth of textile towns, and ordained a spatial zoning of Łódź. It was divided into three independent “settlements” – functionally related, but internally wholly dissimilar. The newcomers were to combine manufacture with agriculture, and hence Łódź’s extraordinary sprawl: “textile colonies” were stretched along a line 5 kilometers-long thoroughfare, the Piotrkowska street (see Plate Six).¹⁰⁰ Still in the early 1860s, hosting 30,000 inhabitants, Łódź represented “a hodge-podge of buildings, farmlands, meadows, forest clumps, wetlands and marshes. Municipal institutions were limited to a slaughterhouse, butcher shops, a hospital with 30 beds, 4 elementary schools and one high school. Only the main streets were paved, and the city was illuminated by 75 street lamps. Every new settler could find their own place and live there the life they were accustomed to.”¹⁰¹ The city was culturally and politically dominated by its German-speaking population, who, having become the darling of Tsarist administration, enjoyed the autonomy and privileges that “disloyal” Poles or “suspect” Jews could never attain. A host of German cultural, social, sports, and musical associations flourished. The German-language press was exempted from the Warsaw-based censorship, but surveyed locally.¹⁰²

By 1900, when Łódź numbered over 300,000 inhabitants, the German dominance had already withered away. Crisis in the countryside affected not only the serfs: the taverns, formerly ran by the Jews, were being taken over by the gentry. The Jews had to move to towns. If in 1810, 36 per cent of Polish Jews lived in the countryside, by 1862 this dropped to 13 per cent. At the same time, rising land

⁹⁸ Israel Joshua Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 2nd ed. (New York :: Penguin Books, 1993), 3. See also: Delphine Bechtel, “Urbanization, Capitalism & Cosmopolitanism: Four Novels & a Film on Jews in the Polish City of Łódź,” *Prooftexts* 26, no. 1/2 (Winter 2006): 79-106.

⁹⁹ Adam Ginsbert, *Łódź: Studium Monograficzne [A Monographic Study of Łódź]* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1962), 49.

¹⁰⁰ Krzysztof Dumala, “Geneza form przestrzennych miast przemysłowych w Królestwie Polskim,” in *Miasto i Kultura Polska Doby Przemysłowej: Przestrzeń*, ed. Hanna Imbs (Wrocław ; Kraków [etc.]: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988), 115-120 Jan Fijałek and Ryszard Rosin, eds., *Łódź: Dzieje Miasta [The History of Lodz]* (Warszawa: PWN, 1980), 153, 164-165.

¹⁰¹ Henryk Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów: Łódź W Latach 1861-1918* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1978), 12-13.

¹⁰² Crago, “The “Polishness” of Production,” 20.

prices kept peasants moored to their plots. Hence peasant migration to cities was seasonal, whereas Jewish migration was permanent.¹⁰³ Initially they squatted in the separate Old Town, and in Bałuty—formerly a manorial village, established as Łódź’s suburb by two Polish nobles, and intended to bring profits from land speculation.¹⁰⁴ Many Jews were pauperized tailors. Because, as a *szlachta* author noted, “our Christian Warsaw merchants do not venture into distant speculations” but prefer more “stable” investments such as real estate, textiles became a real opportunity for the urbanizing Jewry.¹⁰⁵ They were prepared to enter businesses considered “speculative” by others, also by placing all their assets into a single deal.¹⁰⁶

Soon many Jewish merchants prospered because, Singer wrote, “German weavers produced very inferior cloth that was disdained by the rich,” and hence the Jews took wagons to Gdańsk, or, if less wealthy, “conspired with border guards to smuggle in fabrics from Germany.” At the same time, “barefoot Jewish peddlers and runners fanned out across sandy country lanes to buy wool from the peasants,” that was later on shipped abroad. To be sure, German master weavers “vilified the Jews for importing foreign goods ... at the expense of the local industry.” Germans also “resented the fact that Jewish merchants issued cotton to the poor German weavers, thus bringing down the price of the finished good.” Because of the constant dearth of cash, Jewish merchants “issued their own scrip to the weavers when they delivered the finished goods on Friday evenings, and the Jewish tailors, cobblers, and shopkeepers accepted the scrip in lieu of money.”¹⁰⁷ Combining various commercial activities worked in the Jews’ favor. From 1862 most of previous restrictions were lifted, and Jews could freely engage in business; still German weavers, of course, barred Jews from their guild. Following the 1864 uprising, however, when the Polish Kingdom lost most of its autonomy, Russian bureaucrats overran its administration and “were most eager for the bribes and gifts of Jews.” Soon, Jews open their own workshops, and “wherever one turned [in Bałuty], machines clacked and clattered, accompanied by the tailor’s cantorial chants and the seamstresses’ love ballads.”¹⁰⁸

Until the 1860s, Kingdom’s textile manufacturing was evenly distributed among a host of towns similar in size to Łódź. Tsar’s post-1864 economic policy sought to integrate Poland into the Russian Empire, and tax duties were lifted. This primed the enormously absorbent Eastern markets. Paired with the new availability of the steam engine (that allowed to locate textile manufacturing independent of water supplies, and hence concentrate it in one place) Łódź soon outpaced all adjacent towns, and subjugated them economically. Its key advantage was its strategically

¹⁰³ Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim*, 113-117, 142-3, 154.

¹⁰⁴ Marek Sygulski, *Historia Bałut. T. 1, Kolonizacja* [History of Bałuty. Vol. I – Colonization] (Łódź : Ameba, 2003), 98-101, 175-177, 185, 208-9, 221-222, 269-271, 342-350.

¹⁰⁵ Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim*, 309-310.

¹⁰⁶ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 92, Gryzelda Missalowa, *Studia Nad Powstaniem Łódzkiego Okręgu Przemysłowego 1815-1870. Klasa robotnicza* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1967), 35.

¹⁰⁷ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 7-8.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

central position in the textile region, its leadership in the development of mechanized cotton manufacture and its key role as the center of bleaching and dying.¹⁰⁹ In 1820 still a hamlet numbering 767 souls, in 1870 Łódź was already known as Poland's Manchester, and on the eve of the 1905 revolution Łódź was the third largest industrial center in the Russian Empire – after Moscow and St. Petersburg.¹¹⁰ The 1860s "cotton crisis" (following the American Civil War) crowded out many of the weavers and petty industrialists. In 1878 large mechanized factories produced already 84 per cent of Łódź's total output.¹¹¹ The new technology allowed to locate industry independent of water supplies (formerly the main source of energy), and the previously scattered factories now were increasingly crammed cheek by jowl.¹¹² In the 1870s, the old land lease contracts were terminated, and now industrialists became owners of their plots. Both land speculation, as well as the building of industrial "factory enclaves" (covering a quarter of Łódź's territory) begun in earnest.¹¹³ As coke replaced charcoal, steel replaced iron, and cotton replaced wool, the first phase in the making of Poland's Manchester was over.¹¹⁴

Introduction of the mechanized cotton mills and Łódź's takeoff coincided with the abolition of serfdom. Jews were not employed in the new factories – by 1900 not more than a hundred Jews worked behind power looms in the entire Kingdom.¹¹⁵ The most common explanation for that is that Jews did not work Saturdays.¹¹⁶ Given the fact that urbanization offered many Jews a chance to abjure Hasidism (Łódź's rabbis, for example, were known for being better at bookkeeping than interpreting the Torah),¹¹⁷ this explanation is insufficient. It seems probable that the Polish serf family structure fitted much better into the new textile manufacturing, also because the serf labor was predominantly seasonal. After the 1864 land reform, 700,000 of Kingdom's serf families became overnight the owners of nearly 5 million hectares of land. True, those who received less than 5 hectares per family, had difficulties making both ends meet, and within the next two decades around 60,000 of them moved to towns, including to Łódź.¹¹⁸ Yet its population turnover was enormous, however, as Łódź hosted as many seasonal as settled inhabitants.¹¹⁹ Even many well-to-do peasants hired farmhands to work their own land and went to work in cities (mainly as wagoners) attracted by better wages. Because the land reform tied peasants to the land, urban jobs were considered mainly as additional income, and this is why, already after the 1847-8 crisis, it were mainly women and

¹⁰⁹ Missalowa, *Studia Vol. I*, 189, 193-195, Stanisław Liszewski, ed., *Zarys Monografii Województwa Łódzkiego: Funkcja Regionalna Łodzi i Jej Rola W Kształtowaniu Województwa* (Łódź: Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 2001), 9, 33-34, Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 237-239, 254-255.

¹¹⁰ Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 196.

¹¹¹ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 124.

¹¹² Dumala, "Geneza form przestrzennych miast przemysłowych w Królestwie Polskim," 128.

¹¹³ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 136-137, Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 180.

¹¹⁴ Missalowa, *Studia Vol. I*, 259.

¹¹⁵ Crago, "The "Polishness" of Production," 21.

¹¹⁶ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 195.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹¹⁸ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 128.

¹¹⁹ Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 196.

children who were sent to work in textiles.¹²⁰ In the 1880s they constituted 60 to 70 per cent of Łódź's labor force – because, as Singer explained, “young country girls were subservient, didn't drink, and were conscientious about the work.”¹²¹ As the daily wage in a city was much higher than in the countryside (the ratio was 1 to 0.15 before the 1860s; afterwards it fell to 1 to 0.25) the cities offered “temporary social mobility” for many serfs, both poor and well-to-do, who since the sixteenth century were constantly being isolated from the monetary economy.¹²²

From rags to revolution

Scrap-based manufacture

While initially enthusiastically disposed towards developing “German industry” in the Polish Kingdom, the Tsar soon succumbed to the intensive lobbying on the part of the Moscow textile moguls and Łódź's fast expansion came to a halt. The 1880s was the period of propaganda “war between Łódź and Moscow,” resulting in a steep rise in tariffs for both importing cotton to the Kingdom and exporting finished goods to Russia.¹²³ Łódź's textile industry had to reorganize. Introduction of tariffs in 1891 coincided with the expulsion of nearly 20,000 Jews from Moscow. Many of them, who were skillful merchants, settled in Łódź. The “Litvaks,” unlike the Polish Jews, spoke fluent Russian and had extensive contacts in many corners of the Empire.¹²⁴ While before 1890 a significant fraction of Łódź's production went for the Polish market, the Moscow Jews reoriented it fully towards Russia. Yet, Łódź textiles could not compete with those made in Moscow – by the 1890s industrial capacity of the Moscow province alone was significantly larger than of the entire Polish Kingdom.¹²⁵ Instead, something that had already been practiced before by destitute Jews – mixing virgin wool with recycled yarn (“only an absolute expert could detect the difference between this and the pure wool product,” noted Singer)¹²⁶ – became the new basis for Łódź's second phase of expansion.

Gradually Łódź became Europe's prime importer of textile scraps, both British and German, and recycled them into low quality textiles, the so-called “vicuna cotton” (*wigón*), a fabric “wholly unknown outside Russian Poland.”¹²⁷ By the turn of the centuries half of Łódź's cotton production came from waste, combined with small amounts of genuine material.¹²⁸ Łódź also specialized in the production of the so-

¹²⁰ Missalowa, *Studia Vol. II*, 37.

¹²¹ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 167, Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 196

¹²² Missalowa, *Studia Vol. II*, 113, Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 193.

¹²³ Leonid Gorizontov, “The Geopolitical Dimension of Russian-Polish Confrontation in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in *Polish encounters, Russian identity*, ed. David L Ransel and Bożena Shallcross, Indiana-Michigan series in Russian and East European studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 136, Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 249-251.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 400-401.

¹²⁵ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 175.

¹²⁶ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 102.

¹²⁷ Crago, “The “Polishness” of Production,” 33.

¹²⁸ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 178.

called “artificial” or “shoddy wool” (*sztuczna wełna, wełna odpadkowa*), made from processed rags. Łódź’s industry now turned back from cotton to wool – while in 1869 they represented 87 and 10 per cent of Łódź’s output respectively, by 1900 this ratio changed to 53 and 39.¹²⁹ By 1900 Łódź’s textile production “had become synonymous with the heavy-blended ‘wools’ and loosely spun, thick undyed ‘cotton muslins’ worn by peasants in Russia’s Far East.”¹³⁰ The advantage of producing the lowest quality of textiles was that one was immune to changing fashions, but the disadvantage was that consumers were difficult to find.¹³¹ Thereby, ironically, Łódź shared Andrychów’s fate as the provider of cloth for the least demanding customers in the most remote corners of the world.

That new profile left an indelible mark on Łódź – to this very day the word *siajowy* (or *szajowy* or *szajski*) denotes locally something shoddy, coarse, and of inferior quality. It was coined, allegedly, from the first name of Szajn Rosenblatt (1841-1921), a son of an affluent Łódź merchant, who was one of the first to produce textiles adulterated with scraps. Paradoxically, the production of inferior cloth was very labor intensive, and this is what sustained the Bałuty district – by 1905 still a village hosting 100,000 dwellers, marked by its tumbledown housing and crooked and narrow streets, and mainly populated by Jewish paupers. Except for the large mills employing Poles, the putting-out system of production (*przemysł zarobkowy*) gained in significance after 1900, and the Jewish “industrialists without mills” employed both Bałuty Jews and Polish seasonal workers.¹³² Singer described one of such “enterprises” thus: on the edge of the town, “pits had been dug in his courtyard and girls sat there sorting and grading rags, using iron combs to rake through the huge piles of rags that were constantly being brought in on carts. These rags were washed and cleaned before [the owner] sold them back to cheap factories, which transformed them into inferior yarn.”¹³³ A Jewish ragpicker, “harnessed to his wheelbarrow [and] pushing it along with infinite toil ... for a score of paces, and then stop[ping] it again” was a common sight in Kingdom’s countryside. Such carts were usually “chockfull of rags and wooden boxes; above these towered baskets of eggs and a coop full of chicken” that ragpickers sold later in the city. In exchange for rags, they offered peasants needless, children toys, threads, ribbons sweets and the like.¹³⁴ Allegedly Israel Poznański (1833-1900), one of the two greatest textile magnates in Łódź, started as such a teenage ragpicker, whose cart was pulled by a nag, or, as his enemies claimed, by a dog. Thus, “rags-to-riches” careers were made in Łódź in a very literal sense.

Between the 1870s and 1900 Poznański built his “petty kingdom,” employing thousands of workers, and with factory housing for skilled staff, its own hospital, factory-ran stores, schools and the like. At the other end of the Piotrkowska alley,

¹²⁹ Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 260.

¹³⁰ Crago, “The “Polishness” of Production,” 33.

¹³¹ Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 253.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 280.

¹³³ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 69.

¹³⁴ Władysław Stanisław Reymont, *The Peasants* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1924), 199-203.

the other “King of Łódź,” a son of a German weaver Karl Scheibler (1820-1881), erected an even more impressive “company town,” that actually covered one-seventh of Łódź’s entire territory. Both industrial complexes closed the inner-city from north (Poznański) and south (Schiebler), and had adjacent slum district (Bałuty in the north and Chojny in the south), where the unskilled and seasonal population squatted. Still in the 1870s and the 1880s, Scheibler employed mainly seasonal workers. His “petty kingdom” was erected mainly for the German-speaking “factory artisan” (masters and foremen), because he sought to stabilize the skilled labor force. “It was his alone,” Singer describes such a “petty kingdom,” “the plant, the workers’ red cabins resembling barracks, the surrounding fields where his employees planted potatoes and cabbage, the forests where their wives gathered bark and fallen twigs for firewood, the church where they worshipped, the infirmary where they were taken when a machine lopped off their fingers, the semetery where they were buried, the choral societies where they sang of home.”¹³⁵ From the 1890s, Scheibler extended such paternalistic practices onto the rest of his employees, because he sought to retain the production of cottons from genuine materials (waste amounted to 10 per cent of the materials used in 1899 in Scheibler’s factory),¹³⁶ and needed skilled, and hence stabilized, workforce to achieve that.¹³⁷

Łódź’s spatial economy by the turn of the centuries, therefore, reflected its class composition congruent with ethnic communities. In the largest mills, the unskilled Polish-speaking serfs and ex-serfs worked the unskilled jobs. They lived in the slum suburbia, but in a walking distance to their workplaces. Their overseers and skilled technical staff was German-speaking, and lived in factory-owned housing. The mill owners themselves built their palaces right next to their factories – something unusual in Europe in the “area of reconstruction,” where owner’s “presence, his control, would not have been felt to be needed quite so urgently as in Łódź precisely because the industrial town as a whole was acquiring more regulatory functions.”¹³⁸ Łódź, however, was not being haussmanized, and its elite was not moving out to the suburbs.

Łódź’s internal pattern of uneven development was a direct consequence of it being the only urban-cum-industrial island in a vast agricultural ocean. It was, as its critics claimed, an excrescence on an rural body, marked by its enormously volatile character (that required a great deal of direct coercion to maintain). In Łódź serfs or ex-serfs were producing shoddy textiles for other serfs, only through the proxy of a spatial dislocation – the “factory settlement,” as Łódź was being often called. The Jewish slum of Bałuty, inhabited by petty merchants, subcontractors and sweatshop

¹³⁵ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 27.

¹³⁶ Wiesław Puś, *Dzieje Łódzkich Zakładów Przemysłu Bawełnianego Im. Obrońców Pokoju "Uniontex" (d[awnych] Zjednoczonych Zakładów K. Scheiblera I L. Grohmana) W Latach 1827-1977* [History of Obrońców Pokoju Cotton Mill, 1827-1977] (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1979), 107.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹³⁸ Irena Popławska and Stefan Muthesius, “Poland’s Manchester: 19th-Century Industrial and Domestic Architecture in Lodz,” *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 45, no. 2 (June 1986): 160.

workers, was “glued together” by the putting-out system. Such volatile, unstable and low-value-added organism was unable to haussmanize on its own; as I will describe in detail in latter chapters, only postwar urbanization of the entire country allowed Łódź to start “acquiring more regulatory functions” and to fully divorce the place of work from the place of residence, for both the elite and the rank-and-file.

Polonization of production

Seen as self-bound island, Łódź was indeed a quintessential dual city, with a German-speaking elite running, as a Prussian aristocrat put it in *The Brothers Ashnenazi*, a “Polish-Jewish pigsty.” And it was against that domination that the Łódź proletariat stood out already in 1892, during the so-called Łódź Rebellion (*bunt łódzki*). Between May 2 and 5, some 60,000 textile workers went out on the streets of Łódź and demanded to end ethnic discrimination in hiring. As Laura Crago argued, it was a real watershed for labor organizations in Poland, because it “injected Polish nationalism into strike militancy.”¹³⁹ The picture of Łódź as a dual city, however, blurs and becomes much more complex if we analyze Łódź as an element in a larger field of power, and its place in the dominant (Jagiellon) space. As Crago insisted, working-class nationalism in Łódź cannot be understood “as the mental legacy of a bygone noble political and social culture” because in that culture “industrial workers played no role.”¹⁴⁰ In fact, I argue, it stood in opposition to it, and the fate of the 1905 revolution in Łódź soon proved this.

Workers forged what Crago dubbed “production-based” nationalism, that was distinct from the *szlachta*-based nationalism, despite the fact that at the time both were deeply and outspokenly anti-German. While workers demanded “polonization of production,” access to skilled jobs, and the means of consumption, the gentry nationalism was defending the *ancien régime*, sought to keep the labor force anchored in the countryside, and was fundamentally anti-urban. Łódź’s lack of haussmannization meant for its workers that the goods they produced were consumed by somebody else and workers themselves were not consumers. “Polonization of work,” except for removing the “foreign” factory owners (also Jewish held responsible for the low quality) entailed a reorientation towards the home market as well as stopping to produce fabrics from rags. “Polish workers have more need for real, unadulterated wools” – they argued.¹⁴¹ While workers’ agenda was to reconnect the broken circuits of production and consumption, for the gentry critics, it was the very fact that a Polish Manchester existed at all that constituted the crux of the problem. Łódź’s Germanic-Semitic veneer only attested to the truth that cities and Polishness do not mix, and that Poles (both nobles and peasants) were and still are better off in the countryside.

The two strands of nationalism were quite literally “incarcerated” in Łódź and Warsaw respectively. Except for the historical differences, the two cities had very

¹³⁹ Crago, “The “Polishness” of Production,” 23.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

different trajectories in the nineteenth century. Warsaw was “ennobled” – the *déclassé* gentry settled very often in Warsaw, and already in the 1830s a quarter of its population had a *szlachta* background or even a title.¹⁴² Because both cities were only 140 kilometers apart, they attracted migrants from overlapping territories. While before 1864, 79 per cent of Łódź’s working class came from other towns, and not directly from the country,¹⁴³ after the abolition of serfdom Łódź became the destination of the poorest peasants hoping to find unskilled jobs, whereas Warsaw offered more diverse opportunities attractive even for the gentry. Unlike in Warsaw, where state administration offered jobs for the pauperized gentry evolving into the “intelligentsia” (70 percent of Warsaw’s “intellectual workers”¹⁴⁴ were state employees) a noble background was wholly irrelevant for somebody migrating to Łódź. This situation was worsened by the influx of Russian functionaries. Because Łódź grew privately, it had scanty job opportunities for the educated Poles.

“One could fill volumes with the complaints and treats addressed to German industrialists who refused to employ local engineers, masters and clerks,” stressed Jedlicki. “The constant alarmist reports about the invasion of German capital were in fact concerned less about the capital itself ... than about the fact that foreign industry brought in its wake foreign specialists and supervisors while, at the same time, there was no employment for Poles.”¹⁴⁵ Łódź was being rapidly “manorialized”: its exploitative and hostile working environment became its hallmarks. The transition from peasant to urbanite was far more gradual in Warsaw. Only second-generation ex-serf Varsovians found employment in industry; fresh migrants from the country typically worked in transport or construction (if male) and services (if female). Many worked in artisan workshops. Warsaw attracted single migrants who wished to settle in the city and stayed even during crises, whereas Łódź often hosted peasant families ready to go back to the country whenever necessary. German nomenclature used at work and the “manorial mindset” of peasants migrating to Łódź, Anna Żarnowska stressed, “reinforced the abyss between workers and technical and overseeing staff.”¹⁴⁶ As a result in Łódź, unlike in Warsaw, the divide between town and country, between master and operative, and between German/Jew and Pole was sharp.

That division became the cornerstone of Łódź’s “production-based” Piast nationalism, while Warsaw represented the Jagiellon concept of Polishness. Polish publicists, Jedlicki argued, did not have to read Rousseau to find out that civilization was contaminated and cities rotten.¹⁴⁷ Anti-urbanism was deeply entrenched, and further promoted by Polish landed aristocracy in whose interest it was to keep surplus labor in the country. As literacy amongst the peasants become

¹⁴² Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim* , 47.

¹⁴³ Missalowa, *Studia Vol. II*, 76.

¹⁴⁴ A broad category for all non-manual jobs.

¹⁴⁵ Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe*, 195.

¹⁴⁶ Anna Żarnowska, “Wychodźcy ze wsi w mieście przemysłowym [Peasant migrants in an industrial city],” *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis Folia Historica* 46 (1992): 133-139, Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 215.

¹⁴⁷ in: Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim* , 466.

more widespread by the end of the century, so did low-brow pamphlets on urban demoralization, wherein migrating to cities was traduced.¹⁴⁸ Characteristically, the author of most virulent attack, who nicknamed Łódź “the evil city” argued that agricultural labor, unlike factory work, could never be exploitative.¹⁴⁹ Eventually, even the most liberal Polish intellectuals such as Maria Dąbrowska wrote statements like this: “quality Polish culture originated exclusively in the countryside.” “Our cities (partially because they weren’t ours) nurtured only stinking scum (*śmierdzące męty*).” Urban folk was “another race, cavemen,” “coarse, vulgar, with appalling manners,” and “deprived of any metaphysics whatsoever.”¹⁵⁰ The most widely known Polish book on Łódź, the *Promised Land* (1899) by Władysław Reymont, was written in precisely that vein. It portrayed Łódź as an inhuman Moloch, devouring defenseless peasants and spitting out human pulp while “never stopping in its course for one moment.”¹⁵¹ Reymont described how, for example, peasant-workers, surviving on city’s fringe, were “dying piecemeal.” Not only “the factory bit off both [one man’s] feet up to the ankles” but also it took away his children. One of them was beheaded, others “died of the ague.” When asked about Łódź, he groaned aloud: “Oh, that dunghill!” and then shook his fist at the town.¹⁵² Not surprisingly Reymont (who sympathized with Dmowski) received his Noble Prize for a monumental epic *The Peasants* and not for his novel on Łódź.

Lodzermenschen in 1905

The key notion that encapsulated Reymont’s criticism of Łódź was *chamstwo*. This word appears in very similar contexts in Singers’ novel, showing that Łódź’s predicament with the Jagiellon space was not an exclusively Polish phenomenon.¹⁵³ The insult of *cham* abounds in both books, especially as an invective that Poles, Germans and Jews hurl at each other, or those (e.g. servants) whom they want to humiliate. In the beginning of the *Promised Land*, a young idealist explains to Karol Borowiecki (the main protagonist) that he had decided to leave both his job and the town “because, amongst this vile rabble of Łódź (*łódzkie chamstwo*), I find life unbearable! Can’t you understand me—you, who yourself belong to society?—Yes, because I loathe, and with all my soul, not only the factories, but the men—Bucholc, Rosenstein, and the rest of them—that infamous trading gang!”¹⁵⁴ Both novels are accounts of the emergence of what was referred to as *Lodzermensch* –

¹⁴⁸ Baranowski, *Życie Codzienne Wsi Między Wartą a Pilicą W XIX Wieku*, 166.

¹⁴⁹ Konrad Frejdllich, ed., *Uśmiech Ariadny: Antologia Reportażu łódzkiego* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1975), 77.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in: Bronisława Kopczyńska-Jaworska, *Łódź I Inne Miasta* (Łódź: Katedra Etnologii Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1999), 31.

¹⁵¹ Władysław Stanisław Reymont, *The Promised Land* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1927), 176; see also: Jerzy Ryszard Krzyżanowski, *Władysław Stanisław Reymont*, Twayne’s world authors series. Poland (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), 61-63. See also a novel from 1907, Zygmunt Bartkiewicz, *Złe Miasto [The Evil City]*, Biblioteka "Tygla Kultury" t. 14 (Łódź: Fundacja Anima "Tygiel Kultury", 2001).

¹⁵² Reymont, *The Promised Land*, 448.

¹⁵³ *Cham* in Yiddish is חם *cham*). Its most frequent English translation was “boor” – see: Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 123, 142, 200, 282. Today, in none of these languages a word derivative of Ham and similar to the Polish *chamstwo* is commonly used.

¹⁵⁴ Reymont, *The Promised Land*, 27.

allegedly a distinctive urban ethnicity, comprising of people who abjured their ethnic or religious allegiances (Hassidic in Singer's Max Ashnekazi's, and *szlachta* in Borowiecki's case) and embraced money-making pure and simple.

The Lodzian "Polish-Jewish pigsty" was a melting pot where Poles were no longer Poles, Jews not quite Jews, and Germans not the real Germans. "Although Łódź is not a separate state," wrote a Polish journalist in 1904, "it has its own nationality: the so-called *Lodzermensch*. These are people generally devoid of political ideals – Łódź is their only fatherland, because this is where they established themselves materially ... If one were to ask the people of Łódź what was their actual nationality, it is beyond doubt that many of them would not be able to tell."¹⁵⁵ Both Singer and Reymont evoked the linguistic mishmash that the *Lodzermensch* spoke: the "traditional Łódź fashion" for Jews was a mixture of "broken Yiddish and erroneous Hebrew," with many Polish and German (mainly low-brow Saxon *Plattdüütsch*) influences. Interestingly, the Lodzian Yiddish was intelligible for Poles and Germans alike, and Singer's (as well as Reymont's) protagonists swiftly switch between all the three languages, or rather jargons.¹⁵⁶ Although linguistic barriers were the main component of the ethnic-cum-class divisions in that dual city, in fact many of the *Lodzermensch* found it very easy (and natural) to change and mix languages.

What set the *Lodzermensch* aside from the "regular" nationalities (that were right in the making at that time) was that "people of Łódź" could "turn snow into cheese."¹⁵⁷ Borowiecki's old "illusions and noble impulses" were "swept away by life" in Łódź. He turned "cool, hard-headed, caring for nobody, capable of anything – a typical *Lodzermensch*."¹⁵⁸ Of course the term *Lodzermensch* is derived from German, and indeed social mobility in Łódź often entailed "germanization." As Polish nationalist workers complained, there were many workers in Łódź who were Germans "with no sense of ethnic identity" – i.e. former Poles or Jews who traded ethnicity for social mobility.¹⁵⁹ The point is, however, that although Poles in Łódź felt local Germans were being patronizing or condescending, for the entire world outside of Łódź, it were the *Lodzermensch* who were an inferior stock. Singer describes the dilemmas faced by the children of a German industrialist called Huntze: "in Łódź the name Huntze evoked instant respect, but Huntze's children cared little what Łódź thought. They had nothing but scorn for the stinking, smoky pesthole where their father was still remembered from the days when he had arrived from Saxony on his little horse-drawn cart. They younger Huntzes spent most of their time abroad, where they purchased for themselves ancestral estates complete with retinues of lackeys ... They despised [their father's] meerschaums, his crew

¹⁵⁵ Stefan Gorski writing in 1904 quoted in: Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 265-266. See also: Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 280.

¹⁵⁶ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 46, Krzyzanowski, *Wladyslaw Stanislaw Reymont*, 48.

¹⁵⁷ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 249.

¹⁵⁸ Reymont, *The Promised Land*, 29.

¹⁵⁹ Crago, "The "Polishness" of Production," 28.

cut, his execrable table manners, entire way of behavior that accentuated his, and theirs, common stock.”¹⁶⁰ Spitting on a Persian rug was his usual practice.¹⁶¹

Jews in Łódź were also *chamstwo*: Hassidim were, according to their emancipating compatriots, “boorish and uncivilized.” Even Max Ashnekazi (modeled upon Poznański), formerly Simha Meir, did not manage to shrug off the stigma of *chamstwo*. He was, in the eyes of his wife, an “uncouth little man who squirmed in his chair, gulped his coffee, dunked his roll in the butter, poured too much salt, and generally behaved like a boor. Throughout the meal he scribbled on scraps of paper, talked nonstop, then hurried back to the factory with his fly unbuttoned.”¹⁶² When Ashkenazi travelled to Warsaw, he discovered that Warsaw Jews “held a low opinion of [Łódź’s] upstart community,” while Polish nobles loathed Łódź because there they had to deal with “a pack of garlic-eating sheenies.”¹⁶³ The “allure of nobility” (*magia szlachecka*) that drew a clear demarcation line between those “belonging to society” and the *łódzkie chamstwo* was deeply entrenched.¹⁶⁴ Huntze eventually bought a noble title – just as the real-life *Lodzermensch* did. The most spectacular example was that of Juliusz Heinzel (1835-1895), born as a son of a modestly well-to-do Łódź weaver, who died as Baron von Hohenfels in a Saxon castle.¹⁶⁵

The “vile rabble of Łódź” clung to conspicuous consumption, because that had been the *modus operandi* of class formation for centuries. In order to count as “respectable” they had to display their patina of wealth, however fragile, gaudy or tawdry it seemed to others. They built their palaces right next to their factory enclaves precisely in order to buttress their constantly undermined status. Each *Lodzermensch*, of course, tried to outpace the others in competitive consumption, so eventually Łódź’s inner-city turned into a “a waste heap of all styles of architecture jumbled together by the mason’s art; brisling with turrets, plastered over with stucco decorations constantly peeling off, pierced with innumerable casements, and abounding in stone balconies, in caryatids on the so-called ornamental fronts, in balustrades upon roofs, in grand doorways where liveried janitors slumbered in velvet-covered easy-chairs.”¹⁶⁶ There was a tint of class revanchism in that too: a Jewish magnate in Singer’s novel, “outdid [Huntze] in the opulence of his lifestyle” because “he recalled how his father had bowed and kissed the skirt of the quire’s garment; now that he had the means, he indulged himself in every way to surpass them, the gentiles.” Hence, “he grew a luxuriant mustache, the ends of which he curled up in true Polish fashion. And just like the gentry, he spent a fortune on horses, kept his own racing stables and an army of trainers and jockeys.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi* , 145.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 60, 123, see also 282.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 110, 410.

¹⁶⁴ Kula and Leskiewiczowa, *Przemiany Społeczne W Królestwie Polskim* , 322.

¹⁶⁵ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 114.

¹⁶⁶ Reymont, *The Promised Land*, 108.

¹⁶⁷ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi* , 193.

Perhaps the most illustrious example of a *łódzki cham* was Reymont's Wilczek (whose name means the young wolf) – an usurer of serf origin, “a servant of Jews” speculating in land and dealing in “red goods” – i.e. items stolen from factories set on fire. He is, a critic wrote, “one of the most powerful—and terrifying—characters in Polish literature.”¹⁶⁸ This is how the young wolf described himself to a noble interlocutor: “[you take me for] a boor with sordid instincts (*cham*): ugly, mean, and a blackguard! But what can I do, my good sir? I was born, not in a palace, but in a hovel. I have no good looks, no winning ways with me; I am not one of your set. And so my good qualities—if I have any—are reckoned as vices.”¹⁶⁹ Wiczek's demeanor was radically different from Borowiecki's. While Borowiecki's “handsome face and characteristically delicate features, adorned with a fine well-trimmed moustache, and set off by a firm, strongly marked lower jaw, together with a careless ease of all his motions and glances, denoted him as a typical ‘gentleman,’”¹⁷⁰ Wilczek was “attired with such exaggerated elegance as to be ridiculous. His glaring checkered trousers, patent-leather boots, white silk waistcoat, bright-hued tie, with a very large diamond pin, cut-away in the height of fashion, lustrous stove-pipe hat, long gold watch-chain, gold eye glasses, which he never wore, and the many costly rings he was always toying with—all this signally failed to harmonize his tumid, pimply face, his beady, cunning little eyes, and his low, puckered forehead... while a long, sharp nose, thick, protruding lips, and jowl like that of an ugly dog made him resemble a poodle made up as a stork.”¹⁷¹

What Poles of both serf and *szlachta* decent shared by the end of the nineteenth century was their disenchantment with industrial urbanization led by the “foreign elements.” Many tacitly agreed that the Germans were exploitative and did not want to promote Poles, and that the low quality of textiles produced in the Kingdom was the result of too many Jews running factories. “Factory owners in Łódź were quite happy to invite Alexander III, his lawyers and his gendarmes to perform the role of mediators in industrial conflicts,” reminded Jedlicki, “but no respectable [Warsaw] publicist would ever do so. The practice of state intervention, that is, intervention in support of capital and the established order” loomed large.¹⁷² If Polish intellectuals criticized the “germanization” of the economy and Kingdom's cities, then because they preferred figures like Borowiecki to run the industry, so Poles would exploit Poles, as they did under the Jagiellon regime. They admonished the *łódzkie chamstwo* because it was new rich and because it was a threat to their class integrity, and not because they opposed such a class distinction in the first place. Just as in Andrychów serfs never evolved into a bourgeoisie, no single incident of a former serf becoming a petty capitalist was found in Łódź.¹⁷³ But, as the tragic events of the 1905 revolution soon proved, they did much more than just shaking their fist at Łódź and its elite; that bright moment of the Polish civil society,

¹⁶⁸ Krzyzanowski, *Władysław Stanisław Reymont*, 52.

¹⁶⁹ Reymont, *The Promised Land*, 426.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 367.

¹⁷² Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe*, 283.

¹⁷³ Missalowa, *Studia Vol. I*, 120.

however, was fully squandered because the *szlachta*-based intelligentsia showed very little interest in Łódź's workers' political action, and left them alone to the Tsarists troops.

1905 was a turbulent year in the entire Russian Empire, but in Łódź events took a particularly tragic turn. Russia's lost war with Japan undermined its reputation; the "bloody Sunday" on 22 January 1905, when over thousand striking workers were gunned down in St. Petersburg triggered a wave of strikes in entire Empire. During the spring, both strikes and direct confrontation between the army and workers continued. On the 20th of June in Łódź, Tsarist troops opened fire to a workers' demonstration, and killed 10 people. The next day two more workers (Jews) died in hospital. When it turned out that authorities buried them in secret, fearing that the burial might turn into a political assembly, the enraged population went out on the streets. The Cossacks that arrived to quell the 70,000 workers gathered on Piotrkowska were soon chased off by cobblestones flung at them. Troops that arrived to succor them fired salvos into the crowd, like in regular combat. People disintegrated, but by that evening groups in various places of the city started disarming Russian soldiers and policemen. Those, who refused to surrender, were killed on the spot.

Soon, Łódź became the host of "a modern urban insurrection ... the first of its kind in the history of the Russian Empire." More than a hundred street barricades were set up, and defended by workers armed with bricks and stones, accompanied by a wholesale rioting in the city. Barricades were defended by men, women and children, Jews, Poles and Germans. "Bałtuty swarmed into the streets of Łódź and started fighting. People turned over tramways, pulled lamp posts from the ground, doors and windows from gates and buildings."¹⁷⁴ Some fighters were armed with pikes and spears, others, standing on rooftops, poured acid on the Russian soldiers. By June 25th, the last barricades were taken over by the Tsarist troops. Officially, there were 151 civilian casualties (55 Poles, 79 Jews and 17 Germans), in reality more than two hundred.¹⁷⁵

One of the most enthusiastic reactions to the Łódź uprising was Lenin's. Łódź, he wrote, "is setting a new example, not only of revolutionary enthusiasm and heroism, but of superior forms of struggle ... they are making a step forward, they are covering the city streets with scores of barricades thrown up with amazing speed [and] demonstrate more and more strikingly that the decisive armed struggle of the people against the armed forces of Tsarism is inevitable."¹⁷⁶ Reaction of the Polish political parties was much more reserved. First, both the right and the left were

¹⁷⁴ Jechel Jeszeja Trunk quoted in: Włodzimierz Kalicki "Rok 1905: przebudzeni bombą" [1905: woken up by a bomb] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (12 September 2005).

¹⁷⁵ Robert Blobaum, *Rewolucja: Russian Poland, 1904-1907* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 97, see also: Stanisław Kalabiński, *Czwarte Powstanie Czy Pierwsza Rewolucja: Lata 1905-1907na Ziemiach Polskich*, 2nd ed., (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1976), Orlando Figes, *A people's tragedy: a history of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1997), 185.

¹⁷⁶ Vladimir Ilich Lenin, *Collected Works, Volume 8* (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), 537-543.

entirely surprised by the spontaneous revolt in Łódź, and were wholly marginal during its course. In 1904 all the socialist parties had not more than 500 members in Łódź. For leaders like Piłsudski, “economic” demands such as the ones voiced by the textile workers were a distraction from the main goal – the reemergence of the Polish state.¹⁷⁷ They could not ignore it, however. The key consequence of 1905, as Robert Blobaum argued, was quickly to be seen in the “rapid growth of organizations claiming to represent the interest of mass constituencies. The resulting democratization of Polish political culture is indeed a development so profound that one may dare to label it revolutionary.” The 1905 revolution was “clearly distinguished from the previous gentry-led movements and insurrections,” and constituted a “political debut of the ‘mass’ nation;” henceforth the Polish Kingdom “entered the modern political era, the era of mass politics.”¹⁷⁸ The two divergent strands of Polish nationalism, and two visions of both Poland’s past and the future, the Piast and the Jagiellon, described in Chapter Two, coalesced precisely around, and also thanks to, the 1905 revolution.

In fact Dmowski with his Piast agenda was unlike the “noble romantics” much more practical and realist in outlook.¹⁷⁹ Precisely for that reason he was more skillful in organizing the working-class “civil society.” Already in 1895, activists from his National Democratic Party started establishing nationalist circles where “worker intellectuals” were taught Polish history and given chances to improve their general knowledge. Because Łódź’s new scrap-based profile paradoxically increased the demand for skilled workforce (between 1892 and 1900 employment of highly skilled workers increased threefold), and because in the wake of the 1892 rebellion some inroads into skilled positions were made for Poles, Dmowski’s activist became very successful. Soon these circles were incorporated into the clandestine Society for National Enlightenment (*Towarzystwo Oświaty Narodowej*)¹⁸⁰ that “quickly gained reputation of having a large number of ‘young sons’ of first- and second-generation textile workers within its ranks.”¹⁸¹ By 1904, the Society had 3,000 members in Łódź alone, and in March 1905 it formed the National Union of Workers, a nationalist working-class party.

In June 1905 another working-class organization called Unity emerged. It sought to alleviate the broken link between production and consumption by establishing worker’s cooperatives. These were to demonstrate that factories “could be the creation of the workers themselves.” Over 250 of such operatives were founded, all based exclusively on Polish labor, and the most successful were the food co-operatives. Consequently, “production-based definition of Polishness enabled nationalist workers to defeat the paternalism of their employers.” By 1907 nationalist workers managed “to construct a social life independent of the one that

¹⁷⁷ Crago, “The “Polishness” of Production,” 19.

¹⁷⁸ Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 189.

¹⁷⁹ Andrzej Walicki, “The three traditions in Polish patriotism,” in *Polish Paradoxes*, ed. Stanislaw Gomulka and Antony Polonsky (London: Routledge, 1991), 36-38.

¹⁸⁰ Until 1897 named “National League.”

¹⁸¹ Crago, “The “Polishness” of Production,” 35.

had been created and sustained by textile administrations. Some of the most visible signs of this new social life could be seen in Unity's orchestra; its choral, theater, cycling, and sports groups; as well as in the weekly parties where thousands of workers gathered to enjoy 'entertainment designed specifically for Polish workers.'¹⁸²

Yet, the 1905 revolution turned out to be abortive. Although post-1905 politics "became more open and less conspirational, more representative and less elitist – in a word, more democratic," it was also accompanied by "vulgar forms of discourse and physical form of action, by radicalization, polarization, fragmentation, and violence."¹⁸³ The Tsarist clampdown, executed by the implementation of the Martial Law that continued essentially until 1914, and well as violent feuds between socialist and nationalists that more than often ended in bloodshed, "did much to arrest, if not reverse, the development of civil society," argued Blobaum. "That society, which had emerged in piecemeal fashion at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth, perhaps had been brought to premature blossom by the revolution." The many civic institutions "whether in the form of political parties, trade unions, professional organizations, or communal assemblies, were stained, sometimes violently, by a too-rapid growth and by pressures of popular participation, in unprecedented numbers, by many whose only experience had been that of subjects, and not that of citizens."¹⁸⁴

Just as Łódź been excluded from the Jagiellon vision of history, politics and culture, so was to be the 1905 revolution. The eventual victory of the Jagiellon over the Piast concepts, as well as the entrenched anti-urbanism of Poland's post-gentry elites, meant that the 1905 revolution was never included in the gallery of Polish "national uprisings." Just as the gentry-led insurrections from 1794, 1830 and 1864 have been enshrined in both national historiography and culture, the 1905 revolution never became the "June Uprising," despite the efforts of some historians who have consistently argued in favor of that. But the Łódź Revolution was not that of romantic nobles, the chivalrous descendants of Japheth. It was a revolt in a Polish-Jewish, or rather a serf-Jewish "pigsty." The exclusion of 1905 from the Polish "national consciousness" is the very mark of its quintessentially Jagiellon character. In that sense 1905 was indeed a "premature blossom." Thus the real end to the *ancien régime* and a successful revolution took place in Poland only during World War Two, but, as the reader will see presently, under entirely different circumstances.

¹⁸² Ibid., 40.

¹⁸³ Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 189.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 286-287.

PART TWO



Photograph Five – Łódź's inner-city

PART TWO

Part One of this study was devoted to the description of the fate of the Polish periphery during the Italian, Dutch and British hegemonies. As I argued in Chapter Two, the Renaissance triggered an all-European class formation process in which Poland also participated. Consequently, class struggle during what I dubbed the “Piast epoch” (1300-1500) was followed by the Jagiellon period marked by the process of class formation (1500-1800). The chief consequence of the experience of the Italian hegemony combined with the Dutch one was the “localization” in Poland of the Biblical curse of Ham – a story describing how one of Noah’s sons became the “servant of servants” and employed for the vindication of enserfment of the peasantry. When the system of “merchant feudalism” that emerged during the transition between the Piast and the Jagiellon epoch, and based upon cash-crops agricultural production, became entirely obsolete by the early nineteenth century, an attempt to “modernize” Poland’s ailing economy gave birth to the development of a textile industry. As a result, a hamlet called Łódź by the turn of centuries became known as Poland’s Manchester.

My central argument was that this second moment of “material expansion” (merchant feudalism being the first one) was tightly enveloped by class structures of the *ancien régime* formed during the Italian and Dutch hegemonies. The extant social structures, despite a new material forms, were a powerful check on the new developments. I have given numerous examples of how the spatial uneven development directly followed from these class relations. Most importantly, the fact that Poland’s Manchester developed in Łódź, in the vicinity of Warsaw, and not in Andrychów, in the vicinity of Krakow, shows that weakness of peasantry (a consequence of the Jagiellon structures) was the prerequisite for industrialization. Not only the origins but also the fate of Łódź were controlled by the Jagiellon

power structures deeply anchored in land. The curse of Ham was used to stigmatize the new industrial elites, the so-called *Lodzermensch*. Now, I wish to argue that the third moment of material expansion, namely the post-war urbanization of Poland, was also executed against the backdrop of the extant Jagiellon class structures. That expansion occurred mainly during the “long 1960s” (1956-1976), when the vast bulk of Poland contemporary urban built environment was created. Before I turn in Part Three to the more detailed analysis of the material developments in the long 1960s, in Part Two I wish to describe the transitional moment between the world of the *ancien régime* and the new urban order.

That transition occurred mainly in the period between 1939 and 1956 – that represents, according to many, one of the “darkest” chapters in Polish history. It was the period of great violence and disruption – Poland became the host of one of the murkiest events in human history, the Holocaust. Except for genocide, people living on the territories of Poland were subjected to forced migrations – altogether, historians calculated, 25 million people moved between east and west and north and east during World War Second and its direct aftermath. No new built environments were being erected - on the contrary, material structures were being tumbled down. Second World War brought the revolution that proved abortive in 1905, although the tragic circumstances surrounding this proved to be haunting for the years to come. During the post-war “plebeian revolutionary upswing,” the masses finally entered the world of politics, and the Communists, who were establishing their power in Poland, had to deal with that and adjust to the grassroots moral economies. Their eventual success hinged not upon a clampdown over terrorized people but rather in their adjustments and concessions to the demands of the rank-and-file.

Although Stalinism is usually regarded to have been a gloomy period, in places like Łódź, and for the people who arrived there soon after 1945, it was not so. Most importantly, the Jagiellon space was entirely shambled. First, Poland was “moved” westwards, and “regained” its Piast territories, and the ideological, social and economic energies were directed at reintegrating these territories in the nation-state. Second, Warsaw, the central node and the warden of the integrity of the Jagiellon heritage, was, quite literally, reduced to ashes. As a consequence of a quintessentially quixotic (or: Romantic) “heroism” of the Warsaw intelligentsia, the sixty days of an anti-Nazi uprising in 1944 ended in a major bloodshed of the civilian population (200,000 deaths) as well as nearly complete ruin of Warsaw’s inner-city. As a result, between 1945 and 1950 Łódź was *de facto* Poland’s capital city. Before Warsaw was rebuilt, most state administration was located in Łódź and the new regime was being established from there.

Third, the rules of conduct, especially in the cities, hitherto regulated by the *ancien régime*, were no longer followed. In Łódź, Jewish community annihilated by the Nazis was “replaced” by 1946 by 200,000 migrants from the Polish countryside. For the indigent peasant youth moving to a city was a sign of social advancement; work in textile factories, after decades of unemployment (especially in the countryside) and seven years of war, was a privilege. Poland was “rebuilt” largely thanks to their

efforts. In its earliest stage, however, “rebuilding” entailed merely erecting the most basic infrastructure, getting the industry running and the houses inhabitable. In 1956 Łódź was, materially, very much the same city as twenty years earlier. What was different, however, were the people. Because the new migrants were “unaccustomed” to urban life, and they learned city life more by trial and error rather than by being tutored into it by somebody else (usually from the higher classes). The Stalinist period was, in the official discourse, plagued by hooliganism, vandalism and *chamstwo* of the unruly ex-peasant youth. In fact it was a period of spontaneous urban life, mainly out in the street, and of unprecedented mixing of people in the urban milieu. The same built environment, relatively successful in disciplining the people still in 1939, was unable to contain such dynamism. Hence the strategies of material expansion, mainly suburbanization, that followed 1956, stemmed from the inability to contain and control the post-1945 “terrible urbanite material.”

Just as I argued in Part One, also in post-war Poland “agency” (during the revolutionary period of 1939-1956) preceded “structure” (making of new built environments during the long 1960s). That third moment of material expansion in Poland unfolded against the backdrop of the “American century,” or rather, the American and Soviet rivalry for world supremacy. As I argued in Chapter One, American century was marked by urbanization (or rather wholesale haussmannization of cities) and professionalization. Both trends, that I will describe in detail in Part Three, were a reaction to the first two decades of spontaneous usage of urban space by young migrants. Further, the curse of Ham was now “married” to professionalization and urbanization. While during the feudal times it was a racial category, and during nineteenth century industrialization it became associated with ethnic or national identity (the Lodzermensch), after 1945 *chamstwo* was psychologized and now it represented a mental disposition, disclosed by one’s behavior in urban public space. In Part Two I will describe in great detail the gradual emergence of the modern *chamstwo*. Its “secret” lays in the fear of physical proximity, as its most brilliant theorist Witold Gombrowicz argued. During the very first postwar years people mixed on streets, and the haussmannization of urban space, in which, *chamstwo* would have been locked away from the sight, never occurred. Families often shared apartments. During May Day parades, the Piotrkowska was literally “overflowed” by people. The spatial hierarchies were only in the making, and gained their material manifestation only later, during the long 1960s.

The long twentieth century was American, as I argued after Neil Smith in Chapter One. But, as Catherine Verdery pointed out, it may as well “be called the Bolshevik century. From the moment of the Soviet Union’s emergence after the October Revolution, the presence of this new historical actor on the world stage affected every important event.” It influenced not only international politics, but also internal matters, the “fear of ‘Communism’ and grudging respect for Soviet capabilities spurred violations of civil rights during the McCarthy period, a massive arms

buildup, and substantial development from spin-off technology.”¹ Already in the late 1920s, Stalin declared that capitalism would be defeated “with its own weapon,” and socialism was to become the “scientific transcendence of capitalism.”² After a period of intensive co-operation between the two powers, of which the steel town Magnitogorsk was but a prime example, their struggle for the world hegemony unfolded. As Susan Buck-Morss demonstrated, both the United States and the Soviet Union were constitutive of one another. Neither could have existed even in its contemporary incarnation without the other.³

Likewise, the roots of neo-liberalism are not to be found only in the Western think-tanks or in the “Chicago school,”⁴ but somehow between the Soviet and American projects.⁵ Just as the Americans were emulating the German succession of capitalism British style, socialism as a social system was actually conceived in Germany during the First World War – the “first time in history when something thought to appropriate socialism had been tried.”⁶ The Soviet Union was wholly unaffected by the 1930s crisis of capitalism, and when recession shook the Western world again in the 1970s, behind the Iron Curtain the spirits here high.⁷ When Poland’s productive capabilities and liquidity were paralyzed in 1981, the “Polish crisis” was the first one *ever* when a socialist economy proved fundamentally ineffective. During the crucial 1978-1980 years, when both Reagan and Thatcher took power, and the “neoliberal revolution” took off,⁸ the Americans rose from the ashes, and, as Arrighi demonstrated, won the “Second Cold War” (1979-1985) largely by mobilizing its formerly latent superior command over global financial flows.⁹

¹ Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3.

² Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 29-31.

³ Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000).

⁴ Philip Mirowski, *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁵ Johanna Bockman, “The origins of neoliberalism between Soviet socialism and Western capitalism: “A galaxy without borders”,” *Theory and Society* 36, no. 4 (2007): 343-371 see also: Johanna Bockman and Gil Eyal, “Eastern Europe as a Laboratory for Economic Knowledge: The Transnational Roots of Neoliberalism,” *American Journal of Sociology* 108, no. 2 (2002): 310-352, doi:10.1086/344411

⁶ Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 31.

⁷ For a review of articles on the Western crisis, see: Jerzy Czech, “Trudny drugi etap” [The difficult second phase] *Odgłosy* 1 (1974): 9, Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Dlaczego kryzys energetyczny omija ZSRR?” [Why the the USSR is safe from the energy crisis?] *Odgłosy* 8 (1974): 13, Jerzy Czech, “Zachód w obliczu głębokiego kryzysu” [The West is facing a serious meltdown] *Odgłosy* 41 (1974): 9, Jerzy Czech, „Czym nie jest zachodnia Europa” *Odgłosy* 36 (1975): 9, Jerzy Czech, „Nowy rok – stare problemy” [A New year and old problems] *Odgłosy* 4 (1976): 9, Krzysztof Pogorzelec, „Koniec mitu. Oblicze kapitalizmu” [The end of a myth – the true face of capitalism] *Odgłosy* 26 (1976): 1, 3.

⁸ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1.

⁹ Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London: Verso, 1994), 160-17, 20-21, 320-324.

There was nothing inevitable about the Soviet defeat and the peaceful victory of Western liberal capitalism. The Soviet “meek exit” (Verdery) and a quiet implosion of a superpower was, as Steven Kotkin pointed out, unprecedented in world history. Nuclear armageddon was averted thanks to *internal* developments within the Soviet power elite. Discovery of the Siberian oil and gas reserves in the 1970s, the “greatest economic boom the Soviet Union ever experienced,” set it on a new track, and redefined its global position as a raw materials exporter. Through the mechanism of “opportunity hoarding,” internal power divisions and class alliances suddenly changed in favor of the peaceful unmaking of the Soviet war economy.¹⁰ As we shall see, also in Poland evolution of class relations and new forms of class struggle eventually resulted in the “Polish crisis.” Although the post-1976 economic slowdown was of regional scope, only in Poland it brought a total socio-economic as well as political debacle.¹¹ Henceforth the “Polish crisis,” and the “neoliberal revolution,” the domino fell into a fairly uniform direction.

Developments in the Soviet Block, however, are usually omitted from the narratives of the economic history of the twentieth century. This is true of Harvey’s work, Robert Brenner’s and also Arrighi’s.¹² Yet, history shows that the global hegemonies were rife with contingencies. Before the Genoese, the Dutch, the British and the American assumed world domination, they had to eliminate powerful competitors. Histories are written from the winners’ perspective. We could therefore write an account alternative to Arrighi’s, where shadow world hegemonies would occupy the central place. The Genoese were fiercely competing with other Italian city-states. The Dutch competed with the Portuguese, the British with the French. Americans were first imitating the Germans and then struggling with the Soviet Union. Theirs is also a history of capitalism, albeit one that too often is overshadowed by winners basking in their own glory. The following chapters are intended to fill in that lacunae in the history of the long twentieth century.

¹⁰ Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15-17, 27-28.

¹¹ Kazimierz Poznanski, *Poland's Protracted Transition: Institutional Change And Economic Growth 1970-1994*, 98 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 57.

¹² Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble: The U.S. in the World Economy* (New York: Verso, 2002).



Photograph Six – Piotrkowska street

WAR AS REVOLUTION

For a “study of human madness,” remarked once the poet Czesław Miłosz, “the history of the Vistula basin during [World War Two] makes excellent material.”¹³ What Steven Marcus, whose analysis of nineteenth century Manchester I quoted at length in Chapter One, described as “the distinctively modern experience of the extreme” reached there its new heights.¹⁴ Excesses of Victorian industrialization were dwindled into nothing by the near-perfect destruction of a whole nation, the Jewry, and turning another one, the Poles, into pure labor force poised in the waiting room for annihilation (the Polish population was reduced “only” by twelve percent during the war, and two and a half million Poles were sent to the Reich to perform forced and unpaid labor¹⁵). Six years of war were, as Jan Tomasz Gross argued, far more revolutionary on the Polish society than nearly fifty years of ensuing state socialism. First, Poles bore the psychological brunt of the Holocaust. Murders unfolded only partially in the pitch-dark gas chambers. In small towns and the countryside, Jews were slain on spot rather than deported; the Nazi atrocities were witnessed by millions of Poles.¹⁶ Second, the Nazi colonial economic policies effectively destroyed the Polish *ancien régime*, and lay the ground for the post-war order. The bourgeoisie was eliminated, private property nationalized, the party rule in the economy introduced. Further, all the economic folklore later on associated with state socialism, such as the long queues, endemic shortages, food rationing, the façade character of formal employment and

¹³ Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 229.

¹⁴ see: Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995).

¹⁵ For a personal account of this see See Małeckki, “Listy z 'Einode Ziers”“ *Odgłosy 2* (1968): 6.

¹⁶ Jan Tomasz Gross, “War as revolution,” in *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944-1949*, ed. Norman M Naimark and L. IA Gibianskii (Boulder, Col: Westview Press, 1997), 29-30.

alienating labor, gleeful law flouting, fundamental informality of key sectors of the economy, have their origins in the economic shell shock triggered by World War Two.

Jesteśmy narodem na dorobku – “we are a nation of upstarts,” or, “we are still getting established materially as nation”: all that is lost in the translation of this common phrase in post-war journalism puts into nutshell the way Poland’s economic and social nonsynchronicity was fundamentally reshaped between 1939 and 1945.¹⁷ Although it was a veritable “revolution from above,” World War Two shook the Polish society to its very core. Poland was the only Nazi-occupied belligerent that developed a powerful underground society, equipped with its own political structures, welfare administration, cultural institutions, clandestine educational system, countless daily and periodical publications, and even an army. Furthermore, because the old urban elite, both Jewish and German, was destroyed, windows of opportunity unattainably by any peacetime governmental policy opened. Within six years, as a report for the Polish government in exile read, “a third Polish estate has emerged which did not exist before. It completely took over trade, supplies, mediation, and local crafts provinces. ... Those young peasant sons and former urban proletarians, who once worked for the Jews, are determined, persistent, greedy, deprived of all moral scruples in trade, and superior to Jews in courage, initiative, and flexibility. Those masses ... are not aware what an important historic role they play by conquering for Poland a new territory, formerly occupied by aliens. Those masses will not relinquish what they have conquered.” It was, the author added, “only an economic law, which cannot be helped.”¹⁸

Farwell to the ancien régime

Anti-Semitism as an economic law

The new authorities to be learned very quickly that this “economic law” was indeed difficult to steer. On July 4th 1946, the largest pogrom in postwar Europe took place in the town of Kielce (a regional center in south-east Poland). Its close analysis, as recently performed by Gross, reveals that the Polish post-war anti-Semitism was endowed with two distinctive traits. First, an eerie sense of intimacy between the victim and the perpetrator seemed to be a prerequisite for violence. In Kielce, Poles were not murdering strangers, but rather “their own” Jews, people they personally knew, and it seemed as if the inflicting violence way of making a property claim.¹⁹ During the war there was a widespread (and not ungrounded) belief that hiding Jews yielded a handsome (albeit risky) profit. Since the Jews were “going to die anyway,” the reasoning went, it was better if people close to them, often some

¹⁷ See for example: Zbigniew Chyliński, “Od Mesjasza do dorobkiewicza” *Odgłosy* 29 (1960): 1, see also Jan Tomasz Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House, 2006), 235, Błażej Brzostek, *Za Progiem: Codziennosc W Przestrzeni Publicznej Warszawy Lat 1955-1970* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2007), 279.

¹⁸ Quoted in: Gross, *Fear*, 47.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

“good local people,” would be handed over their property; this was considered less immoral than if Jewish property was taken over by directly by the Nazis. A very common phrase heard by the Jews would be something like this: “why should someone else get your boots? Why not give them to me so I will remember you?”²⁰ Consequently, in the region of Lower Silesia, where many of the returning Jews settled after 1945, yet where none of them were “returning home,” because Poles and Jews arriving there were both equally alien to the area, there were no anti-Jewish sentiments or pogroms.²¹

Second, while during the interwar period the “Jewish Question aroused great passions in Poland, though surprisingly little violence,”²² this dictum was reversed in Kielce. There was a disturbing sense of normalcy in which the murders unfolded in 1946. It was estimated that nearly one-third of Kielce’s entire population participated in the killings, but this was by no means inchoate aggression of a frenzied mob, but rather “picnic-like” crime. This is the major conclusion one can draw from a close analysis of the well-documented murder of Regina Flesz and her newborn son. The perpetrators were law-abiding citizens: a bakery owner, a police corporeal, a shoemaker, and caretaker working for the city hall. The first two men knew each other by sight, and when they meet on the street, the policeman said “I have a little job to do... One needs to close [a Jewish] apartment, take them out, and 'do it'“. The two, soon joined by the shoemaker, agreed on “the job,” and took out Regina Fisz and her son to the street. Then they started discussing how to “do it”. Two of them suggested the policeman kills them in the park near police headquarters, yet the man refused, fearing it might trigger unexpected events. While talking, they saw a truck, and stopped it. They approached the driver and told him that they want to take out and kill some Jews. The driver agreed to participate on the condition he was paid for the “job.” They struck the deal, and loaded their prey onto the truck. During the ride, Fisz negotiated with their perpetrators, but all her offers were declined. In the end the perpetrators earned a few thousand zlotys, seventeen American dollars, two rings, a pin, and a pair of earrings. They even did not bury the body, as if there was nothing to hide.²³

The Kielce pogrom was not clandestine but entirely public. It unfolded precisely when Poles were learning again, or maybe for the very first time ever, how to relate to each other *as Poles* in urban public space. Of the one-third of Poland’s pre-1939 urban population, only a part was actually ethnically Polish – a large proportion (and overwhelming majority of its upper rungs) was “alien.” The nineteenth century industrialization, as we saw in Chapter Three, only exacerbated the “foreignness” of cities in Poland. One of the unintended consequences of the Holocaust was the historically unprecedented polonization of cities. But that polonization occurred only after their intensive nazification. Cities, as well as the property located in them,

²⁰ Ibid., 44-45.

²¹ Ibid., 33-34.

²² Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland*, Oxford paperbacks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 125.

²³ Gross, *Fear*, 103-108.

in 1946 were considered largely ex-Jewish (*pożydowskie*) and/or ex-German (*poniemieckie*) – the two notions were coined precisely during the post-war months. The Kielce pogrom was, in the eyes of the perpetrators, an act of patriotism. There was nothing “shameful” about murdering Jews – it could be even edifying. Boy scouts, the “altar boys” of the nascent Polish nation, proudly wearing a Polish flag-colored armband, were patrolling trains and train stations in Kielce’s vicinity, and searching for Jews to be eliminated, as the pogrom escalated.²⁴ After the years of the Nazi occupation, during which many people fled cities in fear, and urban space was dangerous as the Polish population was being terrorized by commonplace yet always unexpected dragnets, now finally rank-and-file Poles could exercise, however brutally and opaquely, their right to the city. A chat between four strangers on a street does not strike the contemporary reader as being unusual. But when we know that it occurred after six years of terror, when public gatherings were outlawed and could immediately bring repression, then the way in which the murderers of Regina Flesz found one another on the street gains a different dimension. As I argued in the previous two chapters, for centuries Polish peasants were being separated from cities by *szlachta*’s economic practices. The Nazi-induced collapse of the *ancien régime* gave them an unprecedented “window of opportunity,” that they shamelessly ceased upon. They claimed the right to the city by denying, perhaps in the most brutal way imaginable, that right to others.

Of course Kielce was not the only city in Poland that was claimed by its Polish population after the war ended. Also Łódź had been polonized throughout the war. In 1939 only 57 per cent of its population was ethnically Polish. As Łódź’s Jewish population was reduced to 887 individuals in 1944, now 70 per cent of city’s population was Polish, and this increased to nearly 100 per cent once the German community fled in the early 1945.²⁵ There too, as Padraic Kenney argued in his brilliant study, “nationalism was central to the politics of liberation: a city where the Polish language had been outlawed [during the war] was now the heart of Poland”.²⁶ Indeed, Łódź was the only large city that survived the war relatively unscathed (Warsaw was literally reduced to ashes during the 1944 uprising²⁷) and it became home to the new post-war administration. Between 1945 and 1950 Łódź was Poland’s *de facto* capital.²⁸ Communist power in Poland was, therefore, being established in and from Łódź, and the way it was negotiated proved highly significant for the years to come.

Although during the Kielce killings, there was, according to Kenney, a “pogrom-like atmosphere” in Łódź, because of its different historical trajectory, the energies

²⁴ Ibid., 114.

²⁵ Tadeusz Bojanowski, *Łódź pod okupacją niemiecką w latach II wojny światowej (1939-1945)* (Łódź : Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1992), 61-62.

²⁶ Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 78.

²⁷ see: Norman Davies, *Rising '44: "the Battle for Warsaw"* (London: Macmillan, 2003).

²⁸ It was estimated that by 1950 most of the central administration moved from Łódź to Warsaw, see: Władysław Rymkiewicz, “Rok przelomowy” [The watershed year], *Odgłosy (Wydanie Specjalne)* 46 (1975): VI.

towards the all-national social mobility were funneled in Łódź into a shop-floor struggle against the Communists, and not the Jews. There seem to be three major reasons for that. First, the “production-based nationalism” specific to Łódź was fundamentally anti-German. It was so not only because Łódź’s textile industry had been dominated by the German-speaking staff. Also socialism had been considered quintessentially German (and hence alien) by the Polish nationalist workers. Łódź’s German community was not only composed of the descendents of Saxon weavers. Many Lassalle socialists persecuted by Bismarck settled in there. “They were good workers, exacting and honest,” described Singer, “and they promptly found employment in Łódź mills. Some had even become bosses.” Unlike the older German generation, “they didn’t attend church, didn’t join glee clubs, but kept together, read contraband books they received from Germany, and sang revolutionary songs at their private get-togethers.”²⁹

Consequently, socialist activists in Łódź were either German speakers, or Poles who traded ethnicity for social mobility. As a nationalist worker from Łódź explained, “because they embraced Germans ... a nationality that acted as if Polish culture stood on a lower plain, the socialists recruited [in Łódź] a very small number of workers of Polish nationality.”³⁰ It is therefore not very surprising that when the Communists started organizing their power in Łódź, and they did so mainly through gaining a foothold in the industry, very quickly the Łódź proletariat made a link between the Nazis and the Communists. The Nazi rule left the Łódź working-class community very integrated through resistance. The conflicts with the Communists was perceived as a continuation of the wartime struggle – and hence the Communists started being called the “new Gestapo” and the like.³¹

The link between Jewishness and Communism, expressed in the notion of the *żydokomuna*, became more widespread in Łódź only in the aftermath to the Kielce pogrom. When the news about the Kielce pogrom reached Łódź, the Party quickly sought to have workers condemn it and demand death penalty for the perpetrators. Rallies were organized in various factories, but only workers in a single shop signed the petition. The next morning, however, the Party daily reported in large type that the Łódź proletariat had condemned the crime. This only aroused anti-Semitism and accusations that the Communists were Jews themselves. Strikes brought out in a dozen of mills. In one of them there was even a spurious phone call asking the workers of Łódź to join a striking wave that allegedly had broken out in Kielce.³² Yet, no violence followed. The second reason for that is that Łódź, unlike Kielce, was an industrial town; claiming the right to the city was mainly executed there through shop-floor politics, and a city-wide pogrom was clearly not a part of that.

²⁹ Israel Joshua Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 208.

³⁰ Laura A. Crago, “The “Polishness” of Production: Factory Politics and the Reinvention of Working-Class National and Political Identities in Russian Poland’s Textile Industry, 1880-1910,” *Slavic Review* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 29.

³¹ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 83, 91.

³² *Ibid.*, 114-115.

Finally, the memory of the 1905 revolution, and the extraordinary violence that followed it, that according to Blobaum “approximated a localized civil war” must have been still strong in Łódź, and that might have also contributed to the absence of violence in 1946.³³ “The use of coercion to achieve strike solidarity,” between 1905 and 1907, “the forced ouster of offensive factory foremen and managerial personnel, and the rioting and barricades of the June uprising all formed a climate of violence capable of transforming the fiercely intense competition among the parties for popular support into armed confrontations.” There was an intensive fratricidal fighting in Łódź between the socialists and the nationalists, especially during the Great Łódź Lockout (started in December 1906). Only between January 1906 and July 1907 the death toll of civil strife was estimated at 322 people.³⁴ After the Great Łódź Lockout ended in 1907, the many political parties held a “peace conference.” By then, “crowds and revolutionaries no longer mingled in search of gangsters. Attacks on state institutions had long ceased to be public spectacles and had instead become isolated acts of terrorism.” When a hated mill owner was gunned down in 1907 the execution of eight socialist workers without trial ten days later “brought the wrath of public opinion down on the [socialist] party—and barely a murmur of public protest on behalf of the workers.”³⁵ Although by the summer of 1946 the Łódź proletariat included many fresh rural migrants, it was still the pre-war factory elite that dictated what was and was not being done on the shop floor; their post-1905 violence-fatigue might have been the additional reason why there was a “pogrom-like atmosphere” but no actual violence in Łódź.

Łódź’s forgotten strikes

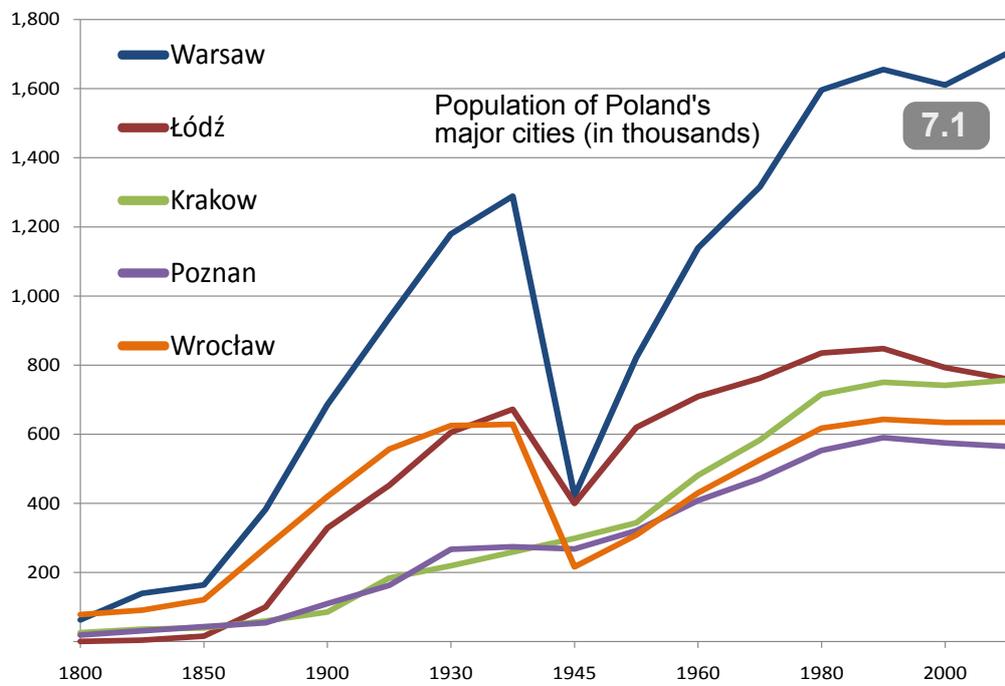
In January 1945, the working-class community in Łódź was as strong as never before, and perhaps, as never after. Throughout the past six years, as one worker in the Nazi AEG plant recalled, they consolidated and now constituted a “very strongly-knit group, very loyal to one another” (*solidarni*) resembling “one family.” The youth at AEG was quickly adopted by the older turners, milling machine operators and tool shop workers who were marshaled there from various mills. “We were united by the hatred of the enemy, relentless desire to stay in our beloved city, and willingness to learn something we might find useful when the war ends.”³⁶ This was only partially a reaction to the Nazi occupation. In great part the spirit of solidarity was due to surviving pre-war working-class traditions. In the two sample factories studied by Kenney, more than three-fifth of the workforce was native to Łódź or the adjacent counties. More than half had lived in Łódź before 1939. Workers recalled that the knowledge of “what to do” was dictated by the pre-war

³³ That the 1905 revolution was integral to working-class collective memory still in the post-war period is clear from a novel written by a Łódź worker and based upon family stories. See: Antoni Rydlewski, *Tygiel* (Łódź: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1985).

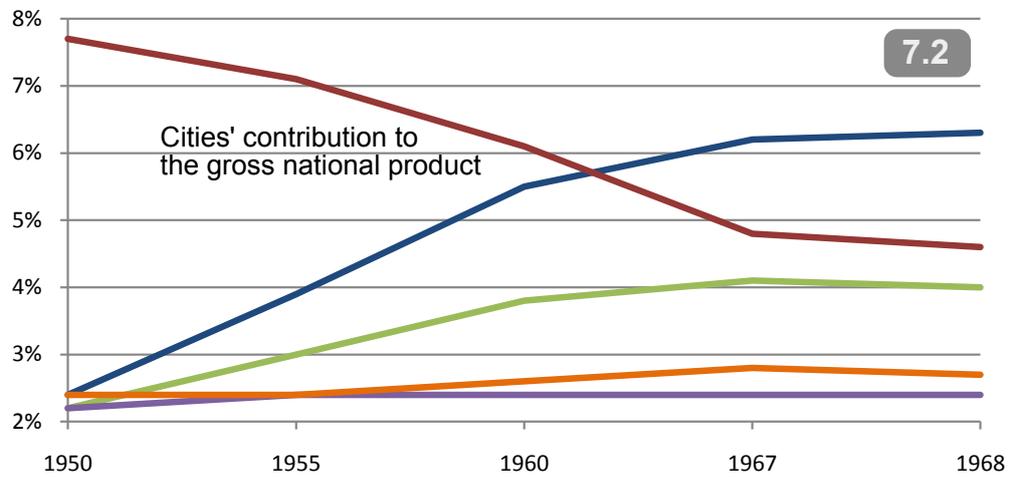
³⁴ Robert Blobaum, *Rewolucja: Russian Poland, 1904-1907* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 223-224.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

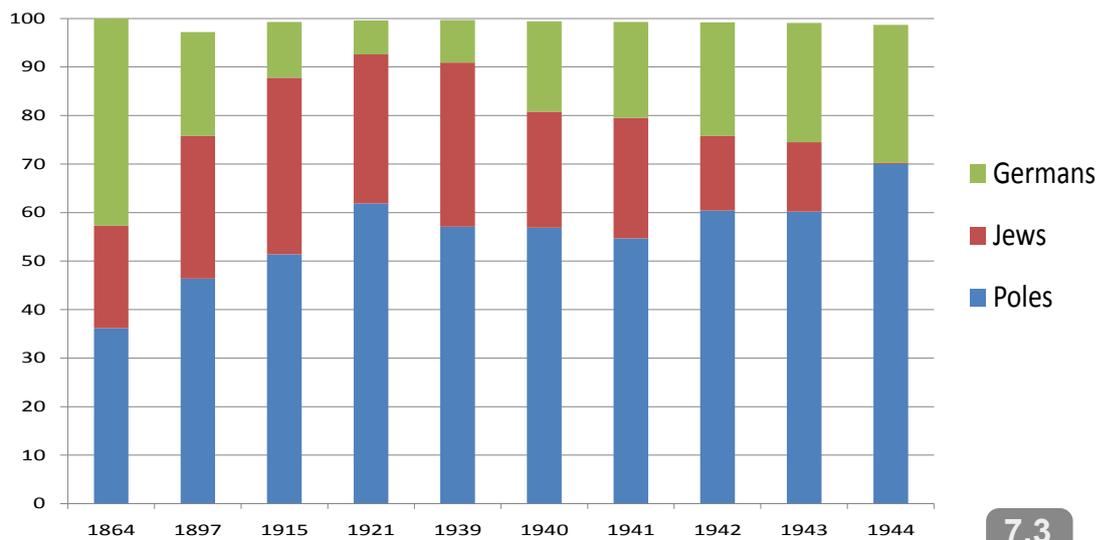
³⁶ Adam Bieńkowski, “AEG na Wodnym Rynku” [AEG on the Wodny Market] *Odgłosy* 13 (1973): 1, Adam Bieńkowski, “Tajemnica twierdzy Kłodzkiej” [Secrets of the Kłodzko Fortress], *Odgłosy* 14 (1973): 1, 4.



7.1



7.2



7.3

Plate seven

Poland's and Łódź's demography and Łódź's decline in the national economy

Source: Rosin and Fijałek, *Łódź*, p. 218-219, Bojanowski, *Łódź*, p. 61, Mortimer-Szymczak, *Łódź*, p. 130

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tradition. “The atmosphere was such that nobody had to be told” about keeping the workstations clean, or that if somebody's machine broke down, then others should come and help repairing it. Pre-war hierarchies prevailed: older workers still stood up when a supervisor entered the dining room where they were having their lunch.³⁷ When in late 1944 Germans started fleeing Łódź, Polish workers, rescued Łódź's industrial capacities by hiding at their homes parts of machines that the Nazis wanted to dismantle and take with them to Germany. Now Polish workers “took great pride in their ability to outwit the Germans and ran the factories themselves.”³⁸ When the Soviet army took over Łódź, workers were *de facto* managing its industry.

During the first three post-war years, a fierce struggle over the control of production (and distribution of its fruits), and more generally the economy, unfolded in Łódź.³⁹ Just as the Nazis were complete outsiders to Łódź in 1939 (Łódź's NSDAP cell numbered 30 members then⁴⁰), in 1945 the Communists were likewise at a “cultural disadvantage among the urban proletariat in Łódź.” Its industrial community owed very little to the Communists. Party membership was very low in Łódź, and its workers did not feel to compelled join the Communist in order to secure promotion and other benefits.⁴¹ Security Service, for example, had only 260 agents in the entire Łódź province in late 1945, and it was helpless with the strikers. The idea of interrogating protesters was quickly dropped, and they had to be swayed and cajoled by other means into “amicable co-operation.”⁴² In this sense Łódź was in a stark contrast to places like Breslau-cum-Wrocław, where no pre-war industrial community survived, and where all population was composed of recent migrants (mainly young, uneducated and unskilled) repatriated from territories in the East that Poland had lost in the course of war. Łódź was, of course, not alone in its contentious fever. There was a general “plebeian left-wing revolutionary upswing” in the entire Central and Eastern European region and it took three years for the Communists to “handle” it.⁴³

The quelling of this popular unrest involved a great deal of collusion with the “plebeian” moral economy, as the Kielce pogrom clearly demonstrated. The “handling” of the revolutionary upswing was so successful, however, that the Łódź strikes have been quickly forgotten. Just as the 1905 revolution was “excluded” from the national consciousness, the 1945-1948 strikes never become included in the official historiography of anti-Communist resistance. This pertains *especially* to the post-1989 period, dominated by the *Solidarność* ethos (see Chapter Nine). According to virtually all Polish accounts (Kenney's brilliant study is a notable

³⁷ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 75-76.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 103-104.

⁴⁰ Bojanowski, *Łódź pod okupacją*, 51.

⁴¹ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 84-85.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 98, 288.

⁴³ T. Iván Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery*, Cambridge studies in modern economic history 1 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 25.

exception, but it was never translated into Polish) anti-communist social upheavals started in Poland only with the 1956 revolt. Unlike in 1956 and later, during the Łódź strikes (just as in the 1905 revolution), intellectuals played no role. Not that they were not around: in fact most of Poland's cultural elite lived in Łódź at that time. Despite the fact that Łódź was dubbed the "capital of the Polish proletariat"⁴⁴ there was a profound rift between workers and intellectuals (more on that in Chapter Five). This extraordinary lacunae in collective memory only attests to Łódź's marginal position in Poland's predominantly Jagiellon cultural and intellectual space.

In the post-war shop-floor struggle, Łódź working-class community was led by pre-war "factory artisans;" the Communists gradually undermined their strong foothold and established their own grip over the industry by promoting young workforce that rushed in droves to Łódź after 1945 (more on that in Chapter Five). Communists, as Gross put it, the "paramount pragmatics of power,"⁴⁵ unable to establish a real hegemony set out to deny power to others. Through the "policy of differentiation," they induced social groups and milieus to quarrel and dissociate, and built their strength on the weakness of others.⁴⁶ By fomenting discord between young and old workforce in Łódź's factories (as well as importing Soviet disciplining techniques such as labor competition), they broke their wartime solidarity, and gradually extirpated the grassroots working-class elite. 1945 to 1948 was the period of classic shop floor politics, both place-bound and place-centered, wherein appointments of managerial staff were the critical and most contentious issues. In this sense it was a post-scriptum to the 1905 revolution. Initially workers summoned up spontaneously, and even elected their own directors. "They perceived [factory] management," argued Kenney "not the state nor central economic administration as having the greatest influence on their well-being. Workers contested wage scales, norm setting, and work rules to negotiate the parameters of the employer-worker relationship." Just as before the mill owner was seen as the key figure, now the factory director was still perceived as somebody with powers far exceeding the mere running of the enterprise. Even when workers complained about "high prices or shortages, they did so because they believed the factory director had the power to intervene. And while party or union representatives did intervene as well, the director was the one who answered the workers' charges."⁴⁷ In a way, they hoped for the old-time factory paternalism to continue, only on new, more favorable, terms. But that is only part of the picture. The wartime experience also brought some fundamental changes that put an end to the Łódź "production-based nationalism," and moved conflicts onto a new turf.

⁴⁴ Loga-Sowiński quoted in: Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 75

⁴⁵ Gross, *Fear*, 223.

⁴⁶ Gross, "War as revolution," 33-34.

⁴⁷ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 82.

The food-nexus

Gradually, Kenney argued, the Communists moved workers' contentious politics outside of the hidden abode of production, and diverted their attention away, putting an end to nearly three years of "community-wide strikes over the issue of control."⁴⁸ This is how Battle Over Trade, a country-wide campaign launched in May 1947 to nationalize both retail and wholesale commerce as well as to combat price gouging, profiteering, embezzlements, and high prices of staple commodities, gradually absorbed the working-class discontents. Yet, Battle Over Trade was not merely a cunning surrogate for shop-floor politics. Rather, in the same way as authorities' compromising response to the Kielce pogrom, it was a concession to the wartime working-class "moral economy." This notion, introduced first by E.P. Thompson in a classic essay,⁴⁹ became so commonly used that it has been washed off its original meaning, and its analytic edge has been seriously blunted. Thompson's original intention was to show how in the eighteenth century the price of bread (the "bread-nexus") lay in the very heart of the conflict between the countryside and the town *before* wages became the main bone of contention in the wake of the Industrial Revolution.⁵⁰ Today, "moral economy" is more than often used for performing a cultural description of economic beliefs, or even a general "economy of morality,"⁵¹ rather than for analyzing grassroots struggles to retain control over food prices, food being a commodity that unlike most others turns out often decisive about human survival. Although Poles contested wages before and after World War Two, during the six revolutionary years the "bread-nexus" gained extraordinary importance. This is why the notion of "moral economy" seems particularly suitable for the analysis of the Polish wartime experience.

For both Kenney, and the people arriving in 1945, Łódź represented the "Poland of the past," because it was the only city where urban life seemed undisturbed by war. Private shops, restaurants, and generally grassroots economic "initiative" mushroomed after the liberation, and after six years of draught one could enjoy urban pleasures again.⁵² Seweryna Szmaglewska (1916-1992), for example, who wrote her *Smoke over Birkenau* (1945) in Łódź, found it to be "the most beautiful of all cities imaginable." Upon her arrival, she was overwhelmed by the portents of spring in Łódź's parks and tall trees surrounding what was now referred to as the Independence Square. She was touched by Polish flags flapping on every corner, and the crowds of people traveling by or on tramways (Poles had been barred from most means of transport during the war). She was also enchanted by "the many people on the streets, dressed decently and modestly, simple folk one could easily approach and strike up a conversation about life, chat about everyday matters

⁴⁸ Ibid., 134.

⁴⁹ E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present*, no. 50 (February 1971): 76-136.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 79.

⁵¹ for an example see: Lorraine Daston, "The Moral Economy of Science," *Osiris* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 1995): 2.

⁵² Władysław Smulski, "Łódź - dobre miasto" [The good city Łódź] *Odgłosy* 49 (1967): 6.

without any fear. There was no more somebody to fear.” Hence “after years of camp life, crowdedness and that terrible din,” living in a non-occupied city, wherein one was free to walk around in public space, was “just like being in paradise.”

The stability of Łódź’s built environment was deceptive, however. In 1945 it was very much a “wounded city,” only that this might have been less visible from the its very center, where most of the intellectuals lived.⁵³ Very soon after their capture of Łódź, the Nazis set out to turn Łódź into a “modern metropolis of the Third Reich.”⁵⁴ They started by changing its name to Litzmannstadt. Unlike some other Polish territories (including Warsaw and Krakow) that were turned into an administrative unit called the General Gouvenment (it had a quasi-colonial status), Łódź, because of its German past and industrial capacity, was incorporated into the Reich. First and foremost, the project of Łódź’s nazification included the prosecution of its Jewry. Very quickly they were isolated in the Litzmannstadt Ghetto, covering the eastern part of the Bałuty district. Perhaps because of Łódź’s erstwhile budding Jewish self-government, expressed in its “highly developed network of religious institutions, social welfare organization, educational establishments, political parties and associations, commercial enterprises, and institutions of public health,” the Litzmannstadt Ghetto, unlike all the others, was actually run by Jewish administration.⁵⁵ The second aspect of Łódź’s Nazi-led “metropolitanization” were the colonial economic policies and evictions of the Polish population. Poles were also separated from the Germans, given starving food rations, and had to rely on the black market for survival. Third, the nazification of Łódź involved making room for settlers from the Reich (who also replaced the local Germans), and who were to be the only righteous urbanites enjoying various privileges. Consequently, what Szmaglewska liked about Łódź in 1945 was its inner-city that was relatively well maintained for the Nazi elite. What she did not like was also a vestige of the war, rather than Łódź’s surviving pre-war “metropolitan” character. First, she did not like the remaining commercial murals in the German language on the Piotrkowska street; second Szmaglewska was irritated by the “enormously wealthy shops, where one could buy absolutely everything, provided one had the money.”⁵⁶

In this, Szmaglewska was in absolute unison with the Stalinist authorities, who, like their leader Bolesław Bierut (1892-1956), admonished the “chaos of shops” and the “eye-jarring motley of the capitalist city.”⁵⁷ She was also in unison with the “simple

⁵³ Jane Schneider and Ida Susser, eds., *Wounded Cities: Destruction and Reconstruction in a Globalized World* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

⁵⁴ Gordon J Horwitz, *Ghettostadt: Łódź and the Making of a Nazi City* (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁶ Seweryna Szmaglewska, “W Łodzi było mi dobrze i źle, jak w życiu” [My life in Łódź was both good and bad, as in life] *Odgłosy* 1 (1967): 1, 6. See also: Władysław Strzemiński, “Obraz Łodzi kapitalistycznej” [The capitalist Łódź] *Wiś* 32/33 (1948): 7-8.

⁵⁷ quoted in: Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 167. See also: David Crowley, “Warsaw’s Shops, Stalinism and the Thaw,” in *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, ed. Susan Emily Reid and David Crowley (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 25-47.

folk” and their “moral economy.”⁵⁸ Turning a blind eye on post-war anti-Semitism was, as Gross argued, the “give” Polish Communists had to spare for the “take” of power.⁵⁹ The Battle Over Trade was yet another step in this process of constantly negotiated establishment of power. Before 1948, the official policy did not necessarily favor nationalization. Rather, the nascent socialist economy was imagined as one of a mixed kind: state-owned, co-operative and private.⁶⁰ Yet already in July 1945 numerous strikes against the threat of re-privatization of the industry broke out in Łódź. This was a clear sign that the working-class did not support a return to pre-1939 capitalism, dismantled in large part already by the Nazis. Waging a battle over co-operative and private businesses, and especially retailers, was the Communists’ response to Poles’ moral economy, forged in the course of the war experience. Hence, when Commissions to Combat High Living Costs (*drożyzna*) were established in factories, and workers were drawn into media campaigns fighting the “parasites of society and especially of working people,” these proved very popular. More than one-quarter of denunciations against such “parasites” came from private individuals. Well-publicized sentences in economic scandals (*afery*) were welcome by the “simple folk” too, especially that some workers have already pushed for introducing death penalty for economic offences.⁶¹

Moral economy in wounded cities

War as the great leveler

Food remained to be a contentious issue, because right after the war 80 per cent of family budgets were spent on it. Yet, the “bred-nexus” represented much more than the margin of survival. Just as taking over the “ex-Jewish property,” it was not dictated by economic necessity, but rather represented a chance for social mobility, or – perceived from another angle – a threat of social debasement. A future winner of the Nobel Prize recalled his wartime experience with a persisting sense of bewilderment. During the war, Miłosz recalled, “I, and many like me, unlearned Western civilization, if what it teaches can be boiled down, more or less, to respect for money and the feeling that one has some kind of rights... There were no grounds for being certain that one would eat next week...” Miłosz, like many others, embarked on small-scale trading; he dealt in whiskey and cigarettes, but also in “less elegant articles like blood sausage and ladies’ underwear. Today this sounds amusing, but my despair, if I returned home without a sale was genuine.”⁶² One of the critical differences between the way Nazis policies affected the Polish and the Jewish populations was that the former had the access to the black market for food, whereas the latter was left to starve on the Nazi-allocated food rations. Counted in terms of calories, the food rations for the Jews were actually slightly higher than those given to Poles (at least during the 1940-1942 period), but the Jewish

⁵⁸ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 191-196.

⁵⁹ Gross, *Fear*, 126-128.

⁶⁰ Tadeusz Kowalik, *Spory O Ustrój Społeczno-Gospodarczy W Polsce: Lata 1944-1948* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Key Text, 2006).

⁶¹ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 191-197.

⁶² Miłosz, *Native Realm*, 232.

population was in far more dire straits precisely because it had very limited opportunities to obtain food outside of the rationing system.⁶³

Miłosz's despair expressed profound social downfall rather than a real prospect of starvation. "No one [from the intelligentsia] seems to have starved to death," recalled the literary critic Kazimierz Wyka in 1946. "Many were impoverished, but the majority managed fairly well." Of course this pertained to those who survived the Nazi and Soviet atrocities. The twelve percent of population loss was a very precious one; the Nazis sought to exterminate the Polish elite, and hence turn Poland into a country of pure unskilled labor force. The inglorious *Sonderaktion Krakau* from November 1939, when nearly two hundred of Krakow's top academics were rounded up and later on sent to concentration camps, was a portend of the Nazi policy. The Katyń Massacre, in which nearly 20,000 Polish POWs, mainly officers, were murdered by the Soviets, also contributed to the destruction of Poland's pre-war elite. Because Poles were barred from nearly all clerical jobs, the surviving intellectuals had to find additional sources of income. Hence, for the first time ever, intellectuals "were confronted by the same prospect as the worker," and had to supplement starvation wages by additional incomes coming from the black market.⁶⁴ A kilogram of rye bread, for example, cost officially 0.27 marks, but 4 to 5 marks on the black market in 1941 and 5 to 6 in 1944. By then a kilogram of pork was priced there at 40 to 150 marks – and as a weekly workers' wage oscillated between 15 and 20 marks, these were exorbitant prices indeed.⁶⁵ Miłosz found an additional income from a stipend paid by the underground state. Many others, Wyka for example, fled to their relatives or friends living in the country, or to small towns. Just as before the war, the rural-urban dichotomy was sharp and corresponded to class divisions I have already described, this forced migration of both urban persons and goods to the countryside, and the sudden and steep increase in the value of foodstuffs, has dramatically altered the relative terms of trade, and broke down the formerly rigid urban-rural divide.

We see this very clearly from analyzing memoirs of Józefa Bogusz-Dzierżkowa, a peasant girl and later a peasant-movement activist, living in a village half way between Warsaw and Łódź. She recalled how during the 1930s, "lords from Warsaw" frequented the countryside for hunting. "They brought large piebald dogs that one would never see in the countryside. They revealed to me as a totally different species of man. But if only, I thought, one could dress peasants as lords, would they look the same? In the end, I concluded not: Varsovians are a different breed of people, just as they have dogs of a different breed."⁶⁶ Before 1945, peasants were generally distinguished by both dress and speech. Dwelling in a city was considered a privilege, and urban life – "lordly" (*pańskie*). *Chamstwo* was, as we have seen, coextensive with rural background that automatically translated, in

⁶³ Bojanowski, *Łódź pod okupacją*, 236.

⁶⁴ Kazimierz Wyka, "The Excluded Economy," in *The Unplanned Society*, ed. Janine R Wedel (New York, N.Y: Columbia University Press, 1992), 35-36.

⁶⁵ Bojanowski, *Łódź pod okupacją*, 172-173.

⁶⁶ Józefa Bogusz-Dzierżkowa, *Smak Ziemi - Smak Życia* (Łódź: Astra, 2001), 10.

the eyes of the elite, into ruffian demeanor. Both urban life and state affairs of the Second Republic were dominated by the landed aristocracy and the military elite.⁶⁷

In the overpopulated countryside, recalled a peasant novelist, “everybody wanted to have a lord (*pan*) in their family. Everybody imagined that a *pan* simply had to have money. Everybody, who went to the city, and wore a necktie and a choker (*kołnierzyk z krawatką*), was already a *pan*, even if he was a porter.” During the interwar period some elements of male urban fashion were adopted in the countryside, but only by few individuals, who were often mocked for “aping the city” (*małpowanie miasta*).⁶⁸ Women still wore folk costumes. This was not merely the countryside “lagging behind” but persistent protection of urban lifestyles. Already in the late nineteenth century, some peasants tried to make “urban” clothes at home, but this was met with fierce resistance of the “public opinion,” and especially the priesthood. A local newspaper in the Łódź region, for example, bemoaned in 1895: “both men and women wearing urban attire ruin the ethnographic character of entire regions, and turn Polish peasants into cosmopolitan colonists.”⁶⁹ Some priests would not grant marriages unless peasants were dressed in folk costumes. Even the urban rank-and-file were convinced of the impermeability of status boundaries. Łódź pre-war workers, for example, did not even consider transgressing class even in dress code. Working-class women, for example, typically walked swathed in kerchiefs, although they could have afforded overcoats worn by people of “higher stations.” Nor did they use available cultural amenities (such as free libraries, schools, courses), or paid heed to decorating their homes.⁷⁰

All this was to change radically during the wartime revolution. Now, as Bogusz-Dzierżkowska recalled, nearly every house in the village hosted urban lodgers. Not only people, but goods flowed from the city to the country. “It seemed as if entire Warsaw was based upon petty trade (*handel*),” she recalled. This flow involved also many short-term travels, as train tickets were cheaper now. As a result, “the longer the Nazi occupation endured, the more precious goods were brought from Warsaw to the countryside: porcelain coffee sets, bedspreads, golden jewelry, rings.” Bogusz-Dzierżkowska started taking classes from teachers who fled Warsaw and hid in the countryside. She travelled to Warsaw to a dentist who typically preferred payment in kind (food) rather than in money. It was during the war when she bought a tailor-made coat.⁷¹ The Nazi occupation radically improved the terms of trade of those who had direct access to the means of subsistence. As a result, another peasant

⁶⁷ For the analysis of how the *szlachta* culture dominated the inter-war Poland, see: Tadeusz Żeleński, *Reflektorem W Mrok: Wybór Publicystyki*, 4th ed. (Warszawa: Państw. Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985), 394-402, 445-456. See also: Andrzej Garlicki, *Piękne Lata Trzydzieste* (Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka, 2008).

⁶⁸ quoted in: Robert Dzięcielski, *Ludowe Obrazy Miasta: Inspiracje Bystroniowskie*, *Łódzkie Studia Etnograficzne* t. 40 (Łódź: PTL, 2001), 134.

⁶⁹ Bohdan Baranowski, *Życie Codzienne Wsi Między Wartą a Pilicą W XIX Wieku* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1969), 59.

⁷⁰ Bronisława Kopczyńska-Jaworska, *Łódź I Inne Miasta* (Łódź: Katedra Etnologii Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1999), 79.

⁷¹ Bogusz-Dzierżkowska, *Smak Ziemi - Smak Życia*, 91-94.

recalled with astonishment, high-brow urbanites had suddenly “realized” that rural life was attractive. Their reasons were, however, rather earthbound, “there was flour [in the countryside], there were pigs that could be slaughtered, and one could make a chicken soup.”⁷²

The excluded economy

It was the Second World War that brought people like Bogusz-Dzierżkowa and Miłosz closer together, or rather, made their lives similar. The two figures symbolize the two divergent Polands: that of the Piast and the Jagiellon decent. The energetic youth peasant movement (*Wici*) that Bogusz-Dzierżkowa was engaged in both before and after the war was one of the main consequences of the 1905 revolution, during which the “masses” entered the world of politics.⁷³ Of course Dmowski did not have the monopoly over the Piast symbolism. During the interwar period, it was also strongly upheld by Wincenty Witos (1874-1945) – the leader of the “Piast” fraction of the Polish People’s Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*), and a three-times Poland’s Prime Minister (eventually overthrown in a military coup orchestrated by Piłsudski in 1926). While Witos, coming from the Habsburg-governed Galicja, was the product of the many decades of thriving peasant social and political self-organization, in the territories between Łódź and Warsaw (where Bogusz-Dzierżkowa came from), such active grassroots activism (as well as thriving cultural life, mushrooming co-operatives and so forth) came only after 1905. Miłosz, on the other hand, born and raised in the city of Vilnius, the very heartland of the Jagiellon concept (also the home of Piłsudski, as well as Poland’s greatest romantic poets), was an outspoken propagator of the Jagiellon concept and the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian-Ukrainian frontier – albeit far more critical, realist and sophisticated than for example Sienkiewicz. His adherence to the Jagiellon idea and the landscape of the “frontier” was perhaps best encapsulated in his *Native Realm*, that constituted a “search for a self-definition,” since, as he wrote, “awareness of one’s origins is like an anchor line plunged into the deep, keeping one within a certain range.”⁷⁴

People who like Miłosz and Bogusz-Dzierżkowa belonged to different stations before 1939, now were thrown into one sack, so to speak, and subjected to the same Nazi policies. Before, Warsaw urbanites seemed to be people of a different breed. Now they coalesced together with the urban proletariat and the peasantry around what Wyka dubbed the “excluded economy.” In countries with less turbulent economic and social history, Wyka argued, the sphere of market exchange was based upon sound moral grounds. It did not cherish the “disgusting psychology of the swindler, huckster and exploiter.” Because wartime trade was as risky as it was profitable, it ushered in a “psychological profile characteristic of speculation,” wherein all profits and sales were outside of any formal supervision. Because of this

⁷² *Wieś Polska 1939-1948: Materiały Konkursowe* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydaw. Naukowe, 1968), 67-68.

⁷³ Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 213-216.

⁷⁴ Miłosz, *Native Realm*, 20. Miłosz’s assessment of interwar Poland was harsh, see: Czesław Miłosz, *Wyprawa W Dwudziestolecie* (Kraków: Wydaw. Literackie, 1999).

wartime demoralization, he stressed, members of the nascent Polish third estate “became accustomed to having [their] goods make [them] immediate profit, without any further service to the customer.” As a result, the entire economy, dominated by its “excluded” sector, was tuned to the vagaries of “personal plunder” and opportunity hoarding in which Poles from all walks of life participated.

The Nazi provisional arrangements such as the rationing system were so tight and so harsh, that Poles were compelled to pursue illegal activities for mere survival. Of course “since everything was forbidden, it was possible to loosen some restrictions and demand gratitude for doing so.”⁷⁵ Nazi-led corruption and embezzlements flourished. Before Poles embarked on appropriating the Jewish property, it had been looted on a far greater scale by the Nazis. This process, as Martin Dean showed, had already started with “economic persecution” of Jews in 1933, and also during the 1938 *Kristallnacht*. Not only in occupied Poland, but also in Western Europe, Jewish property was “plundered by decree” by the Nazis.⁷⁶ In Łódź, for example, a separate enterprise with the sole purpose of taking over and selling Jewish goods was founded.⁷⁷ At the peak of its activity, it staffed 170 people, and it took over goods that were valued at 100 million marks. The real turnover must have been even greater, as the Gestapo persistently complained of illicit deals made by the Nazi administration, and even raided their apartments and confiscated goods. It was dissolved in early 1942, when there was no more Jewish property to be taken over.⁷⁸ By that time most Jews were hoarded in the Litzmannstadt Ghetto; it was estimated that over 70 per cent of them had already been deprived of all personal belongings. Instead of direct plunder, the Nazis, in cooperation with the Jewish self-government, turned the Ghetto into a giant workshop. Employing mainly tailors but not only, the ghetto yielded the Nazis a profit of 2.2 billion marks only between September 1942 and October 1944.⁷⁹ For the Jews, it was means of survival, as the commodities they manufactured were directly exchanged for food then distributed among the ghetto inhabitants.

The making of a Nazi metropolis involved also the moving of Poles from better quality housing to that of a lower standard, or even placing them in previously unoccupied spaces such as attics, basements or closed-down stores. Only between September 1939 and December 1942 around 190,000 Poles were evicted from their dwellings in Łódź alone. By 1944, the population density for the Polish population increased to 3.54 persons per chamber from the pre-war level of 2.61, while for the Germans living in Łódź it fell below 1 (in the Jewish Ghetto it reached 5 to 6

⁷⁵ Wyka, “The Excluded Economy,” 26.

⁷⁶ Martin Dean, *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property In the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), see also: Martin Dean, Constantin Goschler, and Philipp Ther, eds., *Robbery and Restitution: The Conflict Over Jewish Property in Europe*, English language ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

⁷⁷ Litzmannstädter Warenhandelsgesellschaft G.m.b.H, founded on 21 September 1939; see also: Horwitz, *Ghettostadt*, 14.

⁷⁸ Bojanowski, *Łódź pod okupacją*, 295.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 249.

persons per chamber).⁸⁰ Likewise, Poles were banned from most urban amenities (for example parks), and deprived of any *official* means of survival. Just as Jews were deprived of their retail stores right away, Poles were ousted gradually, yet by 1943 only 4.1 of all retail outlets in Łódź were ran by Poles.⁸¹ Because Poles were not allowed to drive cars, horse carriages or even ride bicycles, and were excluded from nearly all clerical jobs. Unlike the Nazi administration, they could embark only on small-scale deals, such as smuggling items directly on their bodies. Illicit deals on a grander scale were reserved for the Germans. Only in the second quarter of 1943, 309 German shop owners were fined for illicit trading, and further 19 were warned. As Łódź was incorporated into the Reich the proximity of a border to the General Government invited further illegal deals. In 1942 a major sham was revealed, wherein a German owner of a large textile store, and another 14 individuals (some of whom were high Nazi officials) were involved in selling textiles outside of the official rationing system. Major punishments, including death penalties and public executions followed (for example of a German store manager who smuggled two tones of textiles from Łódź to Warsaw).⁸²

Criminalization of survival ushered in an adaptive strategy “governed by a conviction that [trading activities] were activities apart, done on the side and for oneself, that anything was permitted and one ought to do whatever one wanted. The amorality of work became a patriotic duty.” This is how “an economy morally excluded, separated from the state and society as a whole” emerged.⁸³ The economy was excluded morally because it was illegal. But it was excluded also because it involved economic behavior formerly admonished in the *szlachta*-dominated culture. The reader recalls some of that anti-urban clarion from the previous chapter. Urbanization, involvement in commerce and business meant to many Polish publicists that such “conquests worthy of shopkeepers degrade our intelligentsia ... today, we have already begun descending to the level of the Jews ... we will soon turn completely into a nation of profiteers and traders... despicable 'polacks' ... shysters and usurers.”⁸⁴

This prophecy was fulfilled only with the “help” of the Nazis. As a German smuggler in Łódź openly admitted, “‘I saw it from the point of view of a businessman.’ The Jews ‘couldn’t nibble on a ring, but if they could get a piece of bread for it, then they could survive for a day or two.’ So ‘if I got something in my hand for 100 marks and it was worth 5000 marks, then I’d be stupid not to buy it. . . You don’t have to be a businessman—that’s what life’s about.’”⁸⁵ The new Polish petty bourgeoisie, Wyka argued, inherited hence “all the negative traits that Polish moralists considered typically Jewish, but now the traits would become nationally

⁸⁰ Ibid., 177-179.

⁸¹ Ibid., 297.

⁸² Ibid., 299-300.

⁸³ Wyka, “The Excluded Economy,” 29.

⁸⁴ Jan Ludwik Popławski quoted in: Jerzy Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe: Nineteenth-Century Polish Approaches to Western Civilization* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 280.

⁸⁵ Quoted in: Horwitz, *Ghettostadt*, 102.

lovely and taboo.”⁸⁶ But it also inherited a Nazi-generated anti-Semitism. Participating in the excluded economy involved a certain degree of collaboration, or at least silent collusion, with the opportunities created (intentionally or not) by the Nazis. It included both emulation of their “immoral” and illicit deals (it has to be borne in mind that the native Łódź Germans were hardly involved in the Nazi administration; they have consistently underlined their loyalty to the Polish state;⁸⁷ instead, it was mainly staffed by settlers from the Reich), deriving satisfaction from outwitting the occupiers, or simply drawing silent profits from the wartime conjuncture.

Because the “excluded economy” was not dissolved in 1945 but became deeply ingrained in the Polish “economic psyche,” Wyka vehemently advocated for a quick moral and political counteraction. “The little Polish shopkeeper,” he pointed out, “sneaked the keys to his Jewish competitor's cashbox, and believed that he had acted morally. To the Germans went the guilt and crime; to us the keys and the cashbox.” Yet, he warned, “the ‘legal’ annihilation of an entire people is part of an undertaking so unparalleled that it was doubtless not staged by history for the purpose of changing the sign on somebody's shop.”⁸⁸ Hence, he postulated the following: “if it has come to pass that there are no Jews involved in Polish economic life, then a new class of ‘baptized’ storekeepers should not profit from it. *The right to profit belongs to the entire nation and state.*”⁸⁹ The Kielce pogrom, that Wyka partially responded to, was a spontaneous act of nationalization, led by the Polish “third estate.” Wyka, just as Szmaglewska and many others, argued for containing this spontaneous appropriation by making it official. Only thus it would be fair too. Hence the incentive for the nationalization of the “excluded economy,” the support for the Battle Over Trade, and the liquidation of the “rich shops” where one could buy anything given one had the money – that jarred Szmaglewska’s eyes in post-war Łódź.

Moral double bookkeeping

One could expect that the representatives of the third estate would fiercely oppose such a policy. The opposite, however, was the case. Just as the success of the Battle Over Trade demonstrated, the postulate to nationalize the “excluded economy” actually stroke a sensitive chord with workers, and was fully endorsed by them in both word and action. By introducing the notion of an “excluded economy,” rather than simply describing a “moral economy” of the Polish wartime crowd, I suggested that ideologies and practices pertaining to the economic sector key for human survival may be, or rather often are, “immoral” alongside being “moral.” The question of demarcating the lines between the two thus arises. Why vast swathes of rank-and-file Poles, who doubtlessly profited from the “excluded economy,”

⁸⁶ Wyka, “The Excluded Economy,” 40.

⁸⁷ Paweł Samuś, “Ziemia obiecana, złe miasto czy mała ojczyzna Polaków, Niemców i Żydów?” [The Promised Land: a homeland for Poles, Germans and Jews] *Tygiel Kultury* 1 (1996): 82.

⁸⁸ Wyka, “The Excluded Economy,” 41.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

condemned it morally at the same time and called for uncompromising punishment of the “economic criminals”? In part, this might have been due to the long centuries of the *szlachta*-based admonition of commerce. But this is only part of the story. We know from anthropologists that human values or cultural systems do not have to be coherent. Rather, often they are not, and even the most fundamental of beliefs may be driven by inherent contradictions, such as the Western dialectic between nature and culture described by Marshall Sahlins.⁹⁰ In our case, a contradiction fulfills an important function: it is a powerful vehicle for social mobility. It required both denouncing involvement in illicit business *and* silent collusion with the Nazis. Profiting from wartime opportunities was contingent upon denying that opportunity to others.

This is why, instead of speaking about “moral” or “immoral” economies, I prefer to use the notion of “moral double bookkeeping” introduced by Józef Burszta in the context of Poland-Lithuania’s vodka-based economy. That context will become helpful in fact – as we have seen in Chapters Two and Three, it was the *szlachta*’s consistent policy to guard their monopoly over “hoarding opportunities” and isolate people outside of their own class from the market, and hence deprive them of opportunities for social advancement. As we saw in Chapter Three, industrial urbanization did not manage to overthrow the *ancien régime*, but instead deepened the land-based economy and society. Only in the course of the wartime Nazi-led revolution, rank-and-file Poles rushed to grab opportunities denied to people of their station for generations. The figure of Wilczek, the ex-serf usurer and *cham* whom we encountered in Chapter Three, rather a product of Reymont’s imagination than a plausible character in *fin de siècle* Łódź, now gained flesh and bone. Wilczek often, wrote Reymont, “sniffed and pried all about the city,” engulfed by revanchism and greed. His “head was turned with the mighty greatness of Łódź ... He looked round upon the whole town as his prey ... and the savage greed of the serf within him swelled to gigantic proportions as he gazed upon the riches he saw. Ways and means were all the same to him. ... An ancestral feeling was upon him—of hunger, come down to him from his forefathers, for ages downtrodden, tramped on by the mighty, driven away from the table of life’s feast, overworked, underfed—and now his turn had come!”⁹¹ The real echelons of Wilczek-likes had to wait another half a century for the chance to “sate their ancestors’ appetites in their posterity.” What makes all this particularly tragic that this historical opportunity was orchestrated by the Nazi authorities.

To be sure, the “turn” of the Wilczek-likes came already in the 1905 revolution, during which anti-Tsarist and anti-capitalist incidents and violence was intertwined

⁹⁰ Marshall David Sahlins, “Folk Dialectics of Nature and Culture,” in *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, ed. Michael Lambek, Blackwell anthologies in social and cultural anthropology 2 (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 185-193.

⁹¹ Władysław Stanisław Reymont, *The Promised Land* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1927), 328-332, see also: Longina Jakubowska, “Morality, Rationality, and History: Dilemmas of Land Reprivatization in Poland,” in *Poland Beyond Communism: “transition” in Critical Perspective*, ed. Michał Buchowski, Edouard Conte, and Carole Nagengast, *Studia ethnographica Friburgensia* Bd. 25 (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 2001), 131-135.

with anti-Jewish pogroms. While in the very early days of the June revolution, the Łódź crowd attacked state vodka distilleries and spilled the liquor on the streets, soon the looting took on a more interested character. Gradually “the line dividing the industrial proletariat from socially marginal groups [became] a very thin one. Economic necessity could blur that line, drawing ‘occasional criminals’ not only from the relatively large number of unemployed but from wage earners as well. By day, these ‘occasional criminals’ might find themselves in a crowd of striking workers. By night, after the dispersal of the crowd by force, the younger members of this group might join with more hard-core criminal elements in knocking out lanterns and looting private shops.” The political parties, and especially the left, “excused such lawlessness and even sanctioned it ... as a form of class struggle.”⁹² This continued even after the abortive revolution: a fighting unit of the Polish Socialist Party from Łódź “formed entirely of workers transformed itself into a criminal band that continued to expropriate money in the name of revolutionary goals.”⁹³ Nevertheless these “opportunities” were not widespread as in wartime. Already during World War One the Łódź proletariat jumped on the new opportunities opened by the black market in food, although that was too often a matter of survival. Since the Polish population tended to leave to the countryside but the Jewish one stayed in cities, it were mainly poor Jewish workers who were “transformed into smugglers, beggars, vendors.” A Bałuty Jewish revolutionary from Singer’s novel “encountered them in the streets with their pails of pickles, baskets of candy, all kinds of junk that they were hawking, and they were ashamed to look him in the eye.” Many Jewish “female workers sold themselves to German soldiers for a piece of bread. Others who had once worked for the [revolutionary] party turned smuggler, opened illicit coffeehouses, conducted black-market transactions, and forgot their ideals.”⁹⁴ But it was only Nazi elimination of the Jewry and their wartime economic system that opened such “opportunities” to Poles.

The wartime “opportunity hoarding” was an aggravated version of the former struggles I described in Chapter Two, simply because the stakes were much higher. But the mechanism of ceasing upon an opportunity while denying it to others was essentially the same, and this represents the “double moral bookkeeping” in nutshell. When building the vodka-based economy, the *szlachta* nested simultaneously radical *laisser-faire* and protectionist ideologies – because the two were applied to different orders. When dealing with the economy as a whole, the Polish nobles argued for the free trade approach, whereas when talking about their very own estates, they turned highly protectionists, and vehemently defended the idea that local monopolies ought to be guarded from outside intruders. This was driven by economic calculation, as the advance of the vodka-based economy required nobles to become entrepreneurial in selling beverages to serfs. The *szlachta*’s double moral bookkeeping was manifested in forcing their own serfs to

⁹² Blobaum, *Rewolucja*, 218.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁹⁴ Israel Joshua Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 2nd ed. (New York :: Penguin Books, 1993), 332-333.

buy vodka in their master's taverns, and hence expecting them to behave "morally," and at the very same time doing everything they could to attract serfs from adjacent villages (that their noble "neighbor" had the monopoly over) to their own taverns, and hence inducing somebody else's serfs to "immoral" behavior. The ideologies of *laissez-faire* as well as a number of marketing tricks, such as promoting the model of a "good tavern-keeper" (who was honest, friendly, forthcoming, did not cheat on the measure, and provided best services for *everybody*) as well as clandestine offers given to serfs from somebody else's villages, were widespread. According to Burszta, the notorious immorality of the Polish serfs (who were simultaneously praised and condemned for the very same activities) was a result of the *szlachta*'s economic calculation.⁹⁵

What makes this similar to the phenomenon at hand is the double standards, different for the society at large (that is expected to adhere to the rules of morality) and for oneself (who is pardoned for behaving immorally only if it yields profit). Double moral bookkeeping is essentially a mechanism for social advancement, possible only thanks to an elimination of potential competitors, slandered for behaving immorally. It is, in other words, a mechanism for accumulation, for "getting established materially," for separating those who have the right to hoard opportunities and those who do not. Of course the group that was entirely excluded from these opportunities (and those tragedy became the "window of opportunity" for both Poles and Germans) were the Jews. Their Polish neighbors wrote them off, so to speak, and asked them to hand over property ("give me your boots so I will remember you"), and if that did not work, then used, following in the wake of the Nazis, coercion.

Yet, as Wyka anticipated, "the gold filling torn out of a corpse's mouth will always bleed, even if no one remembers its national origin."⁹⁶ The wartime "excluded economy" haunted the socialist Poland for its entire lifetime, and as I will describe especially in Part Three, the post-war material investments into Łódź's built environment, as well as the "professionalization" of its retail commerce, were intended precisely to erase that wartime stigma. The newly discovered Polish penchant for hawking and smuggling will be the major headache of the new authorities. Not incidentally, the project of turning Łódź into a Polish metropolis, as I will describe it already in Chapter Six, was initiated by the renewal of the war-torn and ex-Jewish Bałuty, and a veritable continuation of the Battle Over Trade by more "material" means such as reorganization of retail commerce and the creation of a shopping district (see Chapter Eight). The chief psychological impact of the wartime excluded economy, however, was that social mobility was increasingly understood as a phenomenon falling outside of the workplace. It became, together with class reproduction, linked to the means of consumption and to commerce rather than to control over the means of production. This was the end of the anti-

⁹⁵ Józef Burszta, *Wieś I Karczma: Rola Karczmy W Życiu Wsi Pańszczyźnianej [The Role of the Country Inn in Manorial Poland]* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1950), 85-86.

⁹⁶ Wyka, "The Excluded Economy," 41, 24.

German “production-based” nationalism of the Polish workers, and the beginning of the consumption-based anti-Semitism. The chief charge pressed against the Jews-Communists, the *żydokomuna*, was precisely that of their alleged keeping of opportunity hoarding to themselves and becoming thus the new “ruling class.” This soon became evident during the struggles over the means of consumption that led, as I will argue in Chapter Seven, to the purges in March 1968. These struggles, it has to be borne in mind, have their roots in the wartime revolution.

The Polish long contemporaneity

The right to steal

This is how the wartime excluded economy became an important component of the Polish “long contemporaneity,” and, arguably, continues to be significant to this day. It became fully conspicuous during the 1980s crisis-ridden “war economy,” when the “second economy” became nearly as important as the first one. Anthropologists who studied Poland during its protracted crisis (1980-2003) found the wartime stories returning persistently as the overarching narrative for explaining the present. Frances Pine, for example, who also studied the countryside surrounding Łódź, suggested that “stories of war and occupation can be read as oblique references to the uncertain present through the vehicle of past events.”⁹⁷ The feelings of insecurity, fear, disempowerment, exploitation and helplessness, that were the cornerstone of the wartime experiences, surfaced in the unstable times of economic and political crisis. But World War Two is part and parcel of the Polish “long contemporaneity” in a number of other ways too. First and foremost, the lingering “excluded economy” became the organizing principle of the post-1981 informality, when, just as during the war, activities associated with the state (unlike those made “privately”) were denigrated. But also that very crisis, as I will discuss in Chapters Eight and Nine, stemmed from the authorities’ inability to cope with the war heritage and integrate the “excluded economy” into the mainstream through urban renewal and professionalization. I will deal with these attempt in chapters Seven and Eight.

Persistence of the excluded economy under state socialism was indeed extraordinary. Despite street vending being outlawed during the war in Łódź (unlike in the General Government), it was also widespread, only that it was clandestine, and mainly manifest in door-to-door peddling, as well as in dealing in goods amongst one’s trust network. The wartime regime of value, as well as the fact that Łódź’s industry was the very first one in Poland to start running, buttressed the position of textile workers soon after the war ended. The post-war restoration moment was one of the very rare ones in history when working in a textile mill was actually considered a privilege, also *vis-à-vis* working in other factories, because it

⁹⁷ Frances Pine, “The village, the city and the outside world: integration and exclusion in two regions of rural Poland,” in *Post-Socialist Peasant?: Rural and Urban Constructions of Identity in Eastern Europe, East Asia and the Former Soviet Union*, ed. Pamela Leonard and Deema Kaneff (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 172.

offered direct access to marketable goods. During the war as well as soon after its end, peasants for example willingly bought up textiles as a form of “investment.”⁹⁸ Until 1947, a substantial portion of textile workers’ salaries was paid in kind (*deputaty*), and then they sold these wares on the black market. Because textiles were short in the whole country, and because for the past 6 years Poles wore old clothes, there was a massive demand for new garment, and people would travel far distances to Łódź to purchase textiles or ready-to-wear.

Hence demand was virtually inexhaustible, and it was estimated that in post-war Łódź profits from the black market amounted to at least one-third of family budgets.⁹⁹ As factory production was considered common rather than private good, and demand was high, the number of thefts skyrocketed. In December 1945 thefts amounted for 10 to 30 per cent of Łódź's entire output. By comparison, in 1939, only 2 per cent of textile production would be found missing. In one factory 18 kilograms of tread per worker disappeared weekly, and the theft was organized “by whole groups.” The authorities quickly deemed thieving a far greater problem than strikes, and introduced increasingly harsh measures. Łódź workers responded to this quickly: during the fall and winter of 1945/6, a number of strikes in which the “right to steal” was being defended broke out.¹⁰⁰

Much of economic and organizational policies in People’s Poland boiled down to eradicating vestiges of the excluded economy. Each factory management often found their own ways of dealing with it. An illustrious example of the struggles over the “right to steal,” and the fact that both moral and excluded economies peacefully co-existed within the conscience of the same individuals, is provided by the small Łódź knitwear mill called Buczka (after its patron). In the 1960s it produced the fashionable (and hence easily marketable) stocking and socks, made from an artificial fabric called *helanco*.¹⁰¹ Because they were scarce, Western *halanco*-based goods could be purchased in private stores for double the official price of the ones made in Buczka. This also meant that stealing the yarn, not only finished products, was enormously profitable, because private craftsmen in Łódź, producing *helanco*-based products, would eagerly buy it.

As a result, the journalist Julian Brysz regretted in 1966, the incentive to make easy and fast profits was so attractive that “not only people with no moral restraints whatsoever succumbed to it, but also those who in less 'favorable' circumstances would have had never considered appropriating the common property (*mienie społeczne*).” Certain Elżbieta S., who had worked in Buczka for ten years, and had an unblemished reputation, was caught red-handed. When she brought a loaf of bread to her Saturday night shift, she seemed a caring and foreseeing mother, as one could not buy bread on Sunday mornings. When a porter controlled her, however, it turned out she had drilled the bread out, and hid 13 pairs of socks in the cavity.

⁹⁸ Leszek Próchniak, *Kolektywizacja Rolnictwa W Regionie Łódzkim* (Łódź: IPN KŚZPNP, 2003), 199.

⁹⁹ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 87.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 91-93.

¹⁰¹ Helanco was a fabric made from *elastil*, a type of elastic polyamide yarn.

Likewise, the “trashmen gang,” smuggling helanco products on a grander scale, comprised the most exemplary workers, some of which have even been awarded factory-built apartments. The “gang” smuggled goods out by having a garbage truck drive up to Buczka, and pretend it was loading garbage, while in reality it stole sackful of knitwear. Only when the fake garbage truck and a genuine one meet one day in the Buczka gates, the management realized that something was going on. When the gang truck returned the following day, the thieving workers were arrested.

The Buczka management made a number of attempts to curb the thefts, but, it admitted that “we have exhausted all possible measures” and that “all our efforts have been in vain.” When the garment industry started working three shifts in the early 1960s, they replaced the system of individual responsibility for production and the raw materials by a workplace system. Now all the 3 people who worked at a single workstation throughout the three shifts would be accounted collectively for the raw materials and goods produced. The intention was to introduce a measure of workers’ self control. It was met with fierce resistance. Workers argued that their task was to produce and not to supervise. They ostensibly vandalized the lockers where the threesomes were meant to keep the yarn, and collectively wrote a petition against this system. The new measure was actually effective: since it was introduced, losses on yarn fell from 20 to 6 percent, and productivity increased by 15 per cent. Because of workers’ continued resistance (e.g. refusing to sign documents), another measure, that of a carrot rather than a stick, was proposed. The management announced that the fifteen of the most reliable workers would be, on the official celebration day of July 22, exempted from the compulsory checks at the gate. The day before the new measure was supposed to be announced, one of that exemplary fifteen was caught red-handed when smuggling stockings out, and hence new idea was dropped.¹⁰²

The modern *chamstwo*

Throughout the entire post-war period, mass media reported, not without a mixed sense of appreciation for the creative means and condemnation of the immoral outcomes, on countless cases when “theft turned out not to be theft.”¹⁰³ Smuggling vodka out of state distillery in tubes of a bicycle used for daily commuting is but one of such examples.¹⁰⁴ A great deal of critique of state socialism, especially the one formed during the 1970s, unwittingly defended the “right to steal.” In the 1980s, the excluded economy became a veritable means of grassroots deindustrialization, or the gradual dismantling of Poland’s industrial capacities by its employees who used state resources for private ends, as I will discuss in Chapter Nine. Perhaps the best known work that, by condemning the socialist totalitarianism actually defends the right to steal, is Krzysztof Kieślowski’s documentary *From a*

¹⁰² Julian Brysz, “Piekące skarpetki” [The itching socks] *Odgłosy* 18 (1966): 1, 5.

¹⁰³ See also E. Firlit and Jerzy Chłopecki, “When theft is not a theft,” Janine Wedel, *The Unplanned Society*, 95-109.

¹⁰⁴ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Szukanie sprawiedliwych” [Where have the honest people gone?] *Odgłosy* 47 (1970): 1, 3.

Night Porter's Point of View (1977). Porters were often portrayed as the very embodiment of Eichmann-style narrow-minded authoritarianism, as in a news item describing how a porter in Łódź did not let a fire brigade inside a factory because they did not show required passes.¹⁰⁵ The main protagonist in Kieślowski's documentary, the porter Marian Osuch, had become the symbol of totalitarian "control freaks." Not only was he overzealous at work – controlling other people had become his "hobby" to boot. Three to four times a week he left for the countryside in order to control anglers – checking if they could produce adequate licenses and used legal fishing equipment. Only in the recent follow up to Kieślowski's one-sided film, Osuch admitted, much amused, that he had often breached the rules he upheld so firmly. He was once caught fishing protected species and was suspended for a year. Likewise, he stole some of the items produced in his factory. "I was not thieving," he explained, "but it were the women who took out the wares from the shop floor and gave them to me." Of course he basked in perfect impunity: "who would be controlling me?" he exclaimed laughing.¹⁰⁶

In both Kieślowski's film and the follow-up the moral double bookkeeping had been reified as distinctive and essential traits of the Socialist economy and society.¹⁰⁷ The struggle to control, contain or refashion the emerging "third Polish estate," as we shall see in latter parts of this study, absorbed a great deal of the disciplining energies of the Communist authorities. Although most critics of state socialism argued that it represented a "totalitarian" system (and Osuch was to be one of its most frightening examples), as we have seen already in this chapter, the Communists grip over society was at best fragile. It was, to be sure, increasing over time, but during the Stalinist period (1948-1956) that is usually denoted as the bleakest days of state socialism in the official historiography, Communists' power was weak, and restricted mainly to the industry. As I will discuss presently in Chapter Five, although the ex-peasant youth was Communists' allies in the workplace, outside of the abode of production they were very difficult to contain. "Hooliganism," another name for proletarian youth's urban activities, became the "bane of Stalinism."¹⁰⁸

The Communists' strategy was not one of imposing their will from above (they were simply unable to do that), but rather accommodating to the situation. They had to, as Gross argued, collude with popular anti-Semitism, as the aftermath of the Kielce pogrom demonstrated. Likewise, they had to put with the "excluded economy" and the double moral bookkeeping, as the Battle Over Trade attested. Likewise, by turning towards development of urban space after 1956, they sought to

¹⁰⁵ The editors, "Jak nas widzą tak nas piszą..." [What others write about Łódź] *Odgłosy* 9 (1968): 1, 4, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Andreas Horvath, *Views of a Retired Night Porter*, 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Janusz Morgański, "Powrót nocnego portiera" [The night porter is back] *Tygodnik Powszechny* 31 (2006): 31, Justyna Jaworska, "Nocny portier wciąż na warcie" [The night porter still on duty] *Dialog* 2 (2008): 5-8.

¹⁰⁸ This applies to the "great terror" in the 1930s Soviet Union too. It was not as much totalitarian, as simply chaotic, see: Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 282-3.

“contain” hooliganism, and discipline the new urban youth. In the course of all these activities, the state and the Communist authorities increasingly adopted their own structures and strategies to the population, rather than molded the people to their pre-conceived truths and utopian ideals.

This is how increasing numbers of Communists became anti-Semites – as the March 1968 purges demonstrated. This is also how the modern *chamstwo* was forged. Thanks to the wartime opportunities, the “savage greed of the serf,” to use Reymont’s description of Wilczek, seeking to “sate their ancestors’ appetites in their posterity”¹⁰⁹ swell to gargantuan proportions and became commonplace. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, it became the new organizing concept of the public urban space. But also, as I will show in Chapter Nine, state institutions internalized *chamstwo*, and the *Solidarność* revolt was in many ways a revolt against the corrupt state that treated its subjects with the brutality and indifference as if they were still serfs and not citizens. Yet during the immediate post-war months, or maybe in some cases years, many Polish intellectuals were genuinely mesmerized by the unprecedented social mobility of the young Polish *chamstwo*.¹¹⁰ In the 1939-1947 period, as the leading anti-Communist dissident and intellectual Adam Michnik pointed out, an “alliance between *chamstwo* and bolshevism was forged.” *Cham* supported the new regime, Michnik argued, because “it did not force him to take off his cap and kiss the squire on his hand. It halted everyday humiliations. The leftwing enlightened intellectuals (*jaśnie oświeceni*) rebelled against the conventions of the *ancien régime* that such humiliations were an integral part of.” Driven by their “religion of rebellion and progress,” the enlightened believed that “evil can be eliminated from the world by abolishing royal privileges, Church’s unlimited power, or the unfairness of private property.” As this alliance was “based upon a lie,” Michnik contended, it led to nihilism. “The revolution against conventions [of the old regime], took us back to the Stone Age.”¹¹¹

The key experience that revealed this to Michnik, to his own testimony, and openly showed the new omnipresence of *chamstwo* was the March 1968 purges. Michnik, who was one of the student leaders beaten up, expelled from the university and imprisoned, was perhaps its prime victim. This was precisely the very first time when *chamstwo* was no longer being appeased but took the upper hand. As brilliantly analyzed by the sociologist Witold Jedlicki, the Party already in the early 1960s was split into two camps, locked in a fierce struggle. These two camps were referred to in the vernacular as *chamy* and *żydy* – that is oafs and Jews. The former were nationalist, chauvinistic, and anti-Semitic, in short embraced a neo-Piast ideology, and the latter were liberal, cosmopolitan and “enlightened,” and were a continuation, albeit in a new context, of the Jagiellon tradition.¹¹² Michnik, who clearly sympathized with the latter camp, recalled that in March 1968, “I understood

¹⁰⁹ Reymont, *The Promised Land*, 328-332.

¹¹⁰ Witold Woroszyński, “Nasza łódzka młodość,” in *Tranzytem Przez Łódź*, ed. Irena Bołtuć-Staszewska (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1964), 136.

¹¹¹ Adam Michnik, “Chamy i anioły” [Oafs and angels] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (26 June 1999): 12.

¹¹² Witold Jedlicki, “Chamy i Żydy” [Oafs and Jews] *Kultura* (Paris) 12 (1962): 3-41.

the dynamic of *chamstwo* let loose (*spuszczzone z łańcucha*).” The fraction of *chamy* purged the Party, universities, the army and the like from *żydy* – no matter of these were real or purported Jews. Already before, *chamstwo*, the newly born Polish “third estate,” occupied the lower rungs of the Communist hierarchy, whereas “the top of the ladder and the salons were restricted to the elites, possessed by the narcotic fascination with power and by the delusions of [the Communist] ideology.”¹¹³

In 1946, the Communist elite was “blinded by their social distance” to the riff-raff *chamstwo* and the “common people” (*lud*): dumb (*ciemny*), ill-mannered and not “well brought up” yet surprisingly violent and assertive.¹¹⁴ “Effluvia of hatred” (*wyziewy podłości*), in Michnik’s phase, inflicted by the *chamstwo* dislodged the *żydy* from power, and forced as many as 20,000 to emigrate. The emergence of the *chamy* fraction, in Gross’ words, was the perfect example of “a carefully orchestrated fusion between Communists and fascists in postwar Eastern Europe,”¹¹⁵ and in orchestrating the purges in 1968, they were driven by the new idea that the Judeo-Communists, the *żydokomuna*, were the new “ruling class.”¹¹⁶ By 1968, the *ancien régime* was definitely dissolved or, rather, fundamentally refashioned. The old dichotomy between *pany* (lords) and *chamy*, the anthropologist Joanna Tokarska-Bakir recently suggested, was replaced by a new one: *chamy* versus *żydy*.¹¹⁷ The post-war Polish social cosmology, so to speak, now hoisted Jews in lieu of nobles as the “ruling class.” That change and this new Polish social cosmology can be understood only through the analysis of “the actual experiences acquired during the war years,” as Gross insisted.¹¹⁸ It was during the wartime “moral breakdown” and its immediate aftermath, and the new structures of opportunity hoarding, that the erstwhile “production-based” anti-German Polish nationalism evolved into “consumption-based” Polish anti-Semitism and anti-Communism.

Crowding-out of conscience

During the 1968 purges, in Michnik’s view, an “angelic” yet utopian Communist revolutionary project ended up as moral slough of despond. The 1970s have only exacerbated it, as manifested by the double moral bookkeeping increasingly widespread in the “nation of upstarts.” *Chamy* supported the regime, Michnik argued, because it moved them out of the countryside to the city. *Chamstwo* entered a new, urban turf, and, as I will discuss in Chapter Six, the new physical proximity between the elite and the riff-raff, triggered a strategy of withdrawal and moral panic on the part of the intellectuals. As Maria Hirszowicz wrote in 1978,

¹¹³ Adam Michnik, “Chamy i anioły.”

¹¹⁴ Gross, *Fear*, 186-190.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹¹⁶ For more on *żydokomuna*, see: *Ibid.*, chap. 6.

¹¹⁷ Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, “Śrubka w polskiej wyobraźni” [The Polish imagination] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (17 March 2007): 20. See also Jacek Cybusz, “Jak byłem i przestałem być antysemitą” [How I was and ceased to be an anti-Semite] *Tygiel Kultury* 3 (1997): 22-24.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 246.

“journalists [in Poland] increasingly complain about uncivilized reactions by the man in the street; many a reporter discovers an offensive by what he calls 'scum' and 'ruffians' [*chamstwo*] and, characteristically enough, appeals direct to the intelligentsia to shape the manners of society.”¹¹⁹ *Chamstwo* as encroaching on the economy and the industry stood for arbitrary abuses of power of those in authority, reminiscent of the “Polish anarchy” wherein even the pettiest noble could, with perfect impunity, trample his or her inferiors as dogs. Moral indignation against such practices, as expressed in the 1970s “cinema of moral anxiety” (the foregoing documentary by Kieślowski was its prime example¹²⁰) eventually led to the *Solidarność* upsurge, as I will discuss in Chapter Nine.

After the eventful 1980-1981 period, *chamstwo*, communism, authoritarianism, politics of retribution and statism became often conflated into one. This is why, the main architect of Poland’s shock therapy, Leszek Balcerowicz, argued in the mid 1990s that the neoliberal dismantling of the state economy was necessary because “states cannot but crowd-out conscience.”¹²¹ Moral indignation became the main dynamo of the neoliberal catharsis.¹²² It became a “nearly eschatological” project as much about “moral purification and post-hoc punishment” of the ill-doers as about technocratic efficiency.¹²³ During the 1990s “transition to capitalism,” the denounced psychological traits have been incarcerated, to borrow Appadurai’s phase,¹²⁴ in the putative “socialist man,” as opposed to the positive hero of the “capitalist person.”¹²⁵ Now to recognize vestiges of “socialism” in somebody was to derogate him or her, and especially those opposed to the neoliberal austerity measures. David Ost traced such condescending attitude of the “egg headed” intellectuals towards the working class back to the mid 1980s. In the writings of Adam Michnik, he argued, workers featured as “irrational hotheads, hostile to reason and common sense, contemptuous of the notion of compromise” and susceptible to “to a cult of the Leader” such as the “sultanic despot” of Lech Wałęsa.¹²⁶

Chamstwo was but one of such derogative terms used during the 1990s: the “socialist people,” *Homo Sovieticus*,¹²⁷ “gray mass” living in “social vacuum,”¹²⁸ or

¹¹⁹ Maria Hirszwicz, “Intelligentsia versus Bureaucracy? The Revival of a Myth in Poland,” *Soviet Studies* 30, no. 3 (July 1978): 357.

¹²⁰ Marek Haltof, *Polish National Cinema* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 147-156.

¹²¹ Quoted in: Don Kalb, “Afterword: globalism and the postsocialist prospects,” in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practice in Eurasia*, ed. C. M Hann (London: Routledge, 2002), 320.

¹²² Wojciech Górecki, *Łódź Przeżyła Katharsis*, (Łódź: Fundacja Anima “Tygiel Kultury”, 1998).

¹²³ Ibid., see also: Gil Eyal, “Anti-Politics and the Spirit of Capitalism: Dissidents, Monetarists, and the Czech Transition to Capitalism,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (February 2000): 49-92.

¹²⁴ Arjun Appadurai, “Putting Hierarchy in Its Place,” *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (February 1988): 36-49.

¹²⁵ Elizabeth C Dunn, *Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), chap. 3.

¹²⁶ David Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 41.

¹²⁷ Natasza Ziółkowska-Karczuk, “Ludzie socjalizmu” [The socialist people: interview with Jadwiga Koralewicz], *BestSeller* 4-5 (1990): 3; for a genealogy of that notion, see: Hirszwicz, “Intelligentsia versus Bureaucracy?,” 337, see also: Michał Buchowski, “Encountering Capitalism at a Grass-Root Level. A Case Study of Entrepreneurs in Western Poland,” in *Poland Beyond Communism*:

even a “Soviet class,”¹²⁹ were in widespread use too.¹³⁰ Just as during the Cold War, socialism was capitalism’s “Other,” a really existing socio-economic system, now it was relegated to the realm of (some) people’s bad habits.¹³¹ More than often, the genealogy of Poland’s “long contemporaneity” would reach back to the wartime experience, making an equality sign between Nazism and Communism. Modern *chamstwo*, the argument ran, was the outcome of their interplay, still looming large in the habits of rank-and-file Poles. “The Nazi occupation,” a leading intellectual pointed out, “engendered a new type of man and a new social constellation. A human mass, millions of anonymous people, lacking a defined worldview, associated in no official organizations or parties, illegally trading in goods and cheating on the authorities, surfaced back then. And today [in 1995] we see this mass very clearly. This is precisely Wałęsa’s background.”¹³²

Media-induced moral panic about the upsurge of *chamstwo* occurs in Poland with stunning regularity.¹³³ Michnik’s intervention from 1999 was a voice in yet another of such public debates, this time on how state socialism’s original sin lingered on and surfaced in post-socialist Poland as widespread *chamstwo*, and the plague of “corruption, opportunism, and clientelism.” He, just like the anthropologist Anna Zadrożyńska, blamed *chamstwo* for “our contemporary disorientation,” the inability to tell “which port we are heading to.”¹³⁴ Michnik quoted at length *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, wherein Edmund Burke mourned the passing away of the “age of chivalry” and its “generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart.”¹³⁵ “*Cham* entered the inner-city way before the Red Army conquered Poland,” wrote Michnik. “It entered the inner-city on the corpse of the Bastille.” Totalitarian twentieth century regimes, Zadrożyńska added, put merely a definitive nail to the coffin of the morally edifying *ancien régime*. World War Two, she stressed, “undermined the universal order, social hierarchies, the sanctity of birth and the peace of death, the female submission and the male chivalry, the intimacy of the inter-human bonds, the bashfulness of the human body, and the efficacy of non-violent gestures.”¹³⁶ Now brazen violence entered the public sphere. Yet, because the Communist propaganda “kept up the appearances of a conflictless society,” the upsurge of *chamstwo* was

“transition” in *Critical Perspective*, ed. Michal Buchowski, Edouard Conte, and Carole Nagengast, *Studia ethnographica Friburgensia* Bd. 25 (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 2001), 294-295.

¹²⁸ Stefan Nowak, “System wartości społeczeństwa polskiego,” *Studia Socjologiczne* 4 (1979).

¹²⁹ Juliusz Gardawski, *Przyzwolenie Ograniczone: Robotnicy Wobec Rynku I Demokracji* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Naukowe PWN, 1996), 52.

¹³⁰ For a critique see: Michal. Buchowski, “The Specter of Orientalism in Europe: From Exotic Other to Stigmatized Brother,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (2006): 463-482.

¹³¹ C.M. Hann, Katherine Verdery, and Caroline Humphrey, “Introduction: postsocialism as a topic of anthropological investigation,” in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practice in Eurasia*, ed. C. M Hann (London: Routledge, 2002), 1-28.

¹³² Marian Brandys in: Gardawski, *Przyzwolenie Ograniczone*, 72.

¹³³ For the most recent voice see: Jacek Żakowski, “*Chamstwo* hula w internecie” [On internet *chamstwo*] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (10 August 2009): 18.

¹³⁴ Adam Michnik, “Chamy i anioły.”

¹³⁵ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 65.

¹³⁶ Anna Zadrożyńska-Barącz, *Targowisko Różności: Spojrzenie Na Kulturę Współczesną* (Warszawa: Twój Styl, 2001), 168.

continually being swept under the carpet. Only after 1989 the “volcano exploded, and it freed so much energy that it breathed a new life into the Leviathan of *chamstwo* on the scale unprecedented in Polish history.”¹³⁷

This was, of course, what Sennett described as psychologization of class. Although the Jews/Communists were to be the new ruling elite in Poland, the Jagiellon spatial structures were only temporarily enervated. The post-1968 campaign has precisely been built upon the mobilization of the Jagiellon heritage, despite the fact that resistance to it, mainly expressed in the Piast ideology of the post-war *chamy*, was changed. Jewishness was now, oddly, part of the Jagiellon heritage together with the *szlachta* lifestyle. The cunning of class did not perish with the structures of the *ancien régime*, however. *Chamstwo* did not lose its class-forming capacity – it still separated those who were allowed to accumulate from those who were being excluded from it – only that the *modus operandi* of class changed. Now class struggle and class formation entered the urban turn – and consequently *chamstwo* was urbanized. It was no longer associated with a racial or ethnic category – now it was psychologized. The very first episode in that modern history of *chamstwo*, and in modern history of class in Poland, was the moment when swathes of indigent peasant youth, who had been “artificially” kept in the countryside during the interwar period and also during World War Two, swarmed to Polish cities after 1945 and fundamentally reshaped them. Or, to be precise, the way they used the old built environment, propelled the authorities to embark on massive urban renewal that followed 1956. Before I describe this in greater detail in Part Three, we need to see how the Stalinist “hooligan” youth became an important agent, albeit largely undocumented, of this historical change.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 170.



Photograph Seven – Łódź at the street level

TERRIBLE URBANITE MATERIAL

I opened this study by asserting that the theory of the capitalist totality should be complemented by the theory of class. In Chapters Two and Three, I argued that class keeps one step ahead of economic and social structures, and that class formation, as well as the Polish merchant feudalism, grew out of class struggle. I therefore showed how parts of the capitalist totality (the Polish grain-based social and economic system) directly grew out of class struggle and formation. I also argued that the class structures forged during Poland's initial "encounter" with (Italian-run) capitalism were so powerful and enduring that the nineteenth century attempt of industrial urbanization, as exemplified by the rise of Łódź, was unsuccessful in bringing out a wholesale social and economic change. Instead, it only strengthened the position of the landed aristocracy and the fundamentally agricultural character of Poland. What is more, class, thanks to its cunning, adapted to the material and economic changes. The curse of Ham loomed large, although *chamstwo* from being a predominantly racial category turned into a notion that was applied to ethnic groups as well, and especially the "Łódź nationality," the so-called Lodzermensch. Only the collapse of the *ancien régime*, brought about by the Nazi occupation of Poland, opened the possibility for "internalization" of urbanization in Poland – the possibility that was first thwarted in the sixteenth century, and remained dormant ever since.

The precedence of class struggle over class formation did not perish together with the *ancien régime*. On the contrary – both entered a new turf. In Chapter Four I described how the collapse of the pre-1939 world brought an unusual "mixing" of Polish classes,

who were subjected to the same, difficult, lot during the Nazi occupation. In this and the coming chapters I will describe how the class structures of the *ancien régime* adapted to the new post-war situation and how again, class struggle came before class formation – although both now unfolded in the urban milieu. Hence, in this chapter I will show how what Ivan Berend called the post-war “plebeian revolutionary upswing” was “handled” by the Communists, and how they managed to build their power precisely upon that “handling.” I will show how during the very first post-war decade (usually described under the label of “Stalinism”), the new young migrants flooded Polish cities, including Łódź, and practically took them over. While during the very first post-war years, the Communists managed to establish a relatively firm grip over the industry, outside of the workplace they were virtually powerless. The very first reaction was to start describing the youth urban life as “hooliganism,” and they mounted a number of campaigns aimed at curbing it. Yet only from the late 1950s, with the first investments into the built environment, the unruly youth, constituted “the bane of Stalinism,” started being effectively “handled.” The material expansion that followed turned the unruly youth into “mature” urban proletariat.

What is extraordinary about the first post-war decade in Poland is that it witnessed a very rare clash between built environment and people. After the Jewish community of Łódź was annihilated by the Nazis, and the forces of the *ancien régime* were no longer keeping peasant youth in the countryside, 220,000 new migrants arrived to Łódź within eleven months. These people were largely unaccustomed to urban life. In the view of their high-brow critics, they “abused” the city’s infrastructure. Yet, as I prefer to view it, they used the city as they pleased; the undisputed terrible dilapidation of the infrastructure was more the outcome of the war and post-war negligence rather than youth “hooliganism” or “vandalism,” or – and this was a very popular argument – the lingering “peasant mindset” and habits of the new urbanites. While the old built environment was relatively successful in “containing” its population before 1939, now there was a mismatch, so to speak, between the city and the people. The urban environment on its own was unable to discipline the urbanites. This was, in short, the reason for the necessity of new material expansion that came after 1956, in which social structures found a new “correspondence” to material milieu.

In Chapter One I promised to return to the structure-agency debate – and the subject at hand seems ideally suited for that purpose. In the urban studies literature, there is a long-sustained view that one of the major dividing lines in the urban theory is the one between David Harvey and Manuel Castells. Harvey, according to Ira Katznelson, “remained committed to a reflectionist epistemology that ultimately reduces questions concerning the agency of class actors to issues of capitalist production and reproduction.” By stressing the “structure” (the capitalist totality) he failed, according to Katznelson, to “grant an ontological independence to states, state-building, and politics,” and conflated state and capitalism “into the single jumbo macrostructure of

the capitalist mode of production.”¹ Harvey’s conception of class, Kian Tajkakhsh continued that argument, was essentially reduced to the logic of capital’s reproduction, and was “too functionalist and economic to be acceptable because it denies the specificity of nonclass phenomena such as community-based movements that form the basis of the urban question.”² Castells, on the other hand, argued Katznelson, abjured Marxism precisely when he embraced the multiplicity of human agency in his analysis of urban social movements. As a result, he “even more thoroughly treated the linkage between capitalist accumulation and class struggle in a formalistic and reductionist way.”³ Castells reified the urban phenomenon as an entirely independent and voluntaristic variable, added Tajkakhsh, and abandoned “the agenda of urban social theory, the project of linking structure, space, and agency within a comparative framework.”⁴ Consequently, neither Harvey nor Castells, Katznelson and Tajkakhsh agreed, managed to forge a theory that would successfully demonstrate the interplay of structure and agency, and the links between “class identity” and “urban identity.”⁵

That contrast is only partially justified. One cannot simply “resolve” the structure-agency dilemma for good – because at various moments in human history, and in different places, the relative strength of both is different. I argued in Chapter Four that the revolutionary force of the Nazi occupation lay in their destruction of the space (mainly Jagiellon) that had sustained the social world of the *ancien régime*. This is why the revolution in Łódź occurred not in 1905 but in 1939 – the upsurge of the Łódź working class in 1905 was entirely isolated in a place. In other words, while structure was stronger in 1905, agency became predominant in the period between 1945 and 1956. This is, to be sure, how Harvey actually described it. “Urbanism is,” he argued, “a way of life predicated on, amongst other things, a certain division of labor and certain hierarchical ordering of activity [and] can therefore function to stabilize” the existing system.⁶ But cities are also contradictory phenomena, Harvey continued, and these tensions can lead to developments of new totalities. Here the question of agency reappears, and here Harvey concurred with E.P. Thompson: following resistance of workers’, the tendencies [for the development of the capitalist totality] are “diverted and the ‘forms of development’ [are] developed in unexpected ways.”⁷ Class formation and material expansion, therefore, follows class struggle. During the entire 1864-1939 period, Łódź was an industrial island in the ocean of the *ancien régime*. The working classes of Łódź could not turn into a political subject, the proletariat (see Chapter One for that distinction) precisely because of the persistence of the *ancien régime*. Łódź’s

¹ Ira Katznelson, *Marxism and the City* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 137-140; for Harvey’s own response to such criticism, see: David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Verso, 2007), 112-114.

² Kian Tajkakhsh, *The Promise of the City: Space, Identity, and Politics in Contemporary Social Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 73.

³ Katznelson, *Marxism and the City*, 137-140.

⁴ Tajkakhsh, *The Promise of the City*, 66.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶ David Harvey, *Social justice and the city* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 203.

⁷ Thompson in: Harvey, *Limits*, 115.

internal pattern of uneven development, manifest for example in the very minimal separation between the place of work and the place of residence, as I argued in Chapter Three, was a direct consequence of that. In 1945 Łódź, as a built environment, was in six-seventh identical as in 1939.⁸ But its social composition was very different. And this was the “trigger” of social change that in turn brought later strategies of material expansion.

Revolutionary upswing

Urbanization old and new

The war released revolutionary energies of unprecedented proportions. The ebullience of reclaiming as well as rebuilding Poland seemed both widespread and genuine (as were the highest fertility rates in Europe).⁹ Authorities were receiving letters from “ordinary citizens” who presented their blueprints for creating a new, better society on the ashes of the old regime. A certain man from Poznań, for example, drafted a detailed analysis of how Poland’s ruined capital could be rebuilt so it would turn into a “beautiful, wholesome and robust” city and not, as it used to be, only an urban profit-making machine.¹⁰ As we saw in Chapter Four, the post-war taking back the cities had their dark side too. But more than often it unfolded in a more peaceful way. In the summer of 1955, for example, an event demonstrating this engulfed Warsaw. 25,000 foreigners and 150,000 Poles (excluding those living in Warsaw) participated in a city-wide Festival of Socialist Youth. Enthusiasm was such that a strange custom of asking foreigners for autographs was quickly established. The festive crowds turned Warsaw, a worker recalled, “into an exotic city.”

On buildings artists put up colorful posters with slogans such as “let’s dance,” “we are merry” or “we are sanguine.” The authorities were absolutely taken aback by the way the youth actually acted upon these calls. “Where did our youth learn these horrid dances from?” – a party official pondered in a secret report. “Our activists kindly ask the youth not to dance in such a way, and sometimes this helps.” In cases it did not, the “resistant hooligans” would be driven 20 to 30 kilometers out of the city, and walking back home was their punishment. On the whole, however, the authorities could not control the gaieties. “Foreigners,” wrote the historian Błażej Brzostek, “visited Poles’ private apartments in droves, and often contacts between the two populations proved to

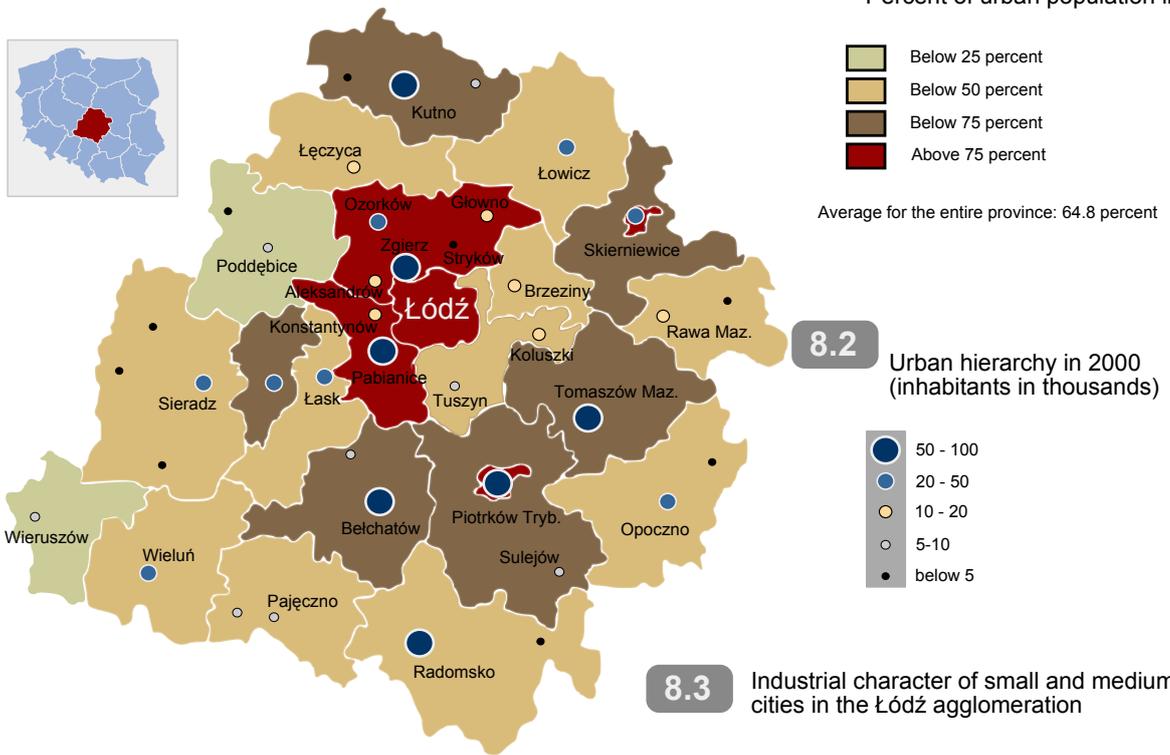
⁸ Adam Ginsbert, *Łódź: Studium Monograficzne [A Monographic Study of Łódź]* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1962), 228.

⁹ Jacek Kuroń, *PRL Dla Początkujących* (Wrocław: Wydaw. Dolnośląskie, 1995), 71.

¹⁰ Jerzy Kochanowski, ed., “Balast przeszłości usunęła wojna... Rok 1945: trzy pomysły na odbudowę Warszawy,” in *Zbudować Warszawę Piękną...: O Nowy Krajobraz Stolicy (1944-1956)*, W Krainie PRL (Warszawa: Trio, 2003), 20; for the plan of rebuilding Łódź, never realized, see: Władysław Strzeмиński, “Łódź sfunkcjonalizowana” [*Funcjonal Łódź*] *Mysł Współczesna* 11 (1947): 444-467.

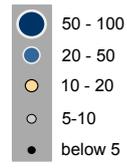
8.1

Percent of urban population in 2000



8.2

Urban hierarchy in 2000 (inhabitants in thousands)



8.3

Industrial character of small and medium sized cities in the Łódź agglomeration

8.4 Urban growth since 1960

Cities with a population of	In 1960			In 2000		
	Number of cities	Number of urbanites in thousands	Percent of the population	Number of cities	Number of urbanites in thousands	Percent of the population
Up to 5,000	13	39.9	3.3	11	37.3	2.2
5-10,000	8	68.7	5.6	8	61.6	3.6
10-20,000	8	104.6	8.6	7	111.6	6.5
20-50,000	6	184.9	15.2	8	262.2	15.3
50-100,000	2	109.0	8.9	7	447.7	26.1
More than 700,000	1	710.0	58.3	1	793.0	46.3
Total	38	1 217.1	99.9	42	1713.4	100.0

Cities	Number of people employed	Employed in industry	
	In thousands	In thousands	In percent
Łódź	228.8	69.2	30.2
Aleksandrów Łódzki	1.8	0.9	47.3
Brzeziny	1.9	0.8	41.9
Głowno	2.7	1.4	52.2
Koluszki	1.9	1.1	57.2
Konstantynów Łódzki	3.2	2.0	64.0
Łask	4.5	2.3	51.8
Ozorków	3.3	2.3	71.0
Pabianice	17.4	11.5	66.1
Stryków	0.7	0.4	57.4
Tuszyn	1.6	0.9	44.4
Zgierz	9.8	4.4	45.4

8.5 Changing urban-rural relation in the Łódź province

Years	Population in thousands			People per 1 km ²	Percent of urban population
	Total	Urban	Rural		
1939	1950	493	1,457	114	25.3
1946	1518	346	1,172	90	22.8
1973	1678	612	1,062	98	36.6
1997	2673	1,735	937	147	64.9

Plate eight

Pattern of urbanization in the Łódź province, 1960-2000

Source: Liszewski, Zarys, p. 180, 214, 219, 222, 247

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be very close indeed.”¹¹ The number of Polish girls, reported the French consul, “who had slept with young foreigners, especially of the black race, was so large, that allegedly a separate clinic was open where they could do an abortion free of charge.”¹² One may expect the same to be had been true of the opposite sex, although, of course, that was less alarming for the authorities.

The Stalinist city is usually depicted as gray, drab and fearful – a site where human spontaneity and agency was brutally clamped down upon by the “totalitarian” power-mongers. For Brzosek, the Youth Festival was actually the very beginning of the post-Stalinist “thaw” that allowed for a far greater “self-expression” of the formerly repressed urban population. I want to argue precisely the opposite: the period that followed 1955 was the one in which increasing control over urban populations was wrested by state-led organization of urban collective consumption backed by material investments.¹³ The Festival belongs to a different period – that of the spontaneous post-war city-claiming, and unregulated urban life. During the very first post-war decade Polish cities were overrun by ex-peasant youth that was entirely unaccustomed to “urban life.” Precisely for that reason it was unruly and enormously difficult to discipline and contain. They lived their urban lives the best way they could – and more than often their behavior was summed as “hooliganism” or at best “uncouth behavior.”

To be sure, the youth was being gradually tutored into the “proper” behavior in cities, but that inculcation of the “right” way of living an urban life took off in earnest only after 1956. Yet because the main protagonists of this grassroots city-claiming and city-making were the post-war *chamstwo*, the classic “people without history,” their story has not really been told. Since most written accounts on that period of the “plebeian revolutionary upswing” come from its high-brow critics (as the Party archives quoted above indicate), we need to carefully sieve the information. Some “private” accounts of Stalinism recently published clearly demonstrated, however, that seen from the personal point of view, Stalinism was, except for the atmosphere of political militancy and struggle, a “beautiful” period even for those who felt they were being repressed. This departs radically from the “official” accounts of Stalinism and the foregone conclusions typical of the “totalitarian paradigm.”¹⁴

Poland’s new urban countenance was the leitmotif of testimonies left by those who visited it after the anti-Stalinist “thaw.” “The day was drizzly and the landscape revealed itself as gray and colorless” – this was the very first thing one of the émigré visitors noticed when crossing the Polish border by train after eighteen years of absence. “Long rectangles of russet-yellow fields punctuated by sheaf rows, clumps of

¹¹ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 30.

¹² in: *Ibid.*, 30ff.

¹³ A similar point was made in: Crowley, “Warsaw’s Shops.”

¹⁴ Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, *Przez Dziurkę Od Klucza: Życie Prywatne W Krakowie (1945-1989)* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2005), 158-168.

trees, and thatched cottages; horse wagons on bumpy roads paved with field stones. Just as if I saw it yesterday. The war years and the ensuing changes fundamentally transformed (*przeorały*) many aspects of life in Poland, but it seems that the outer shell of the hinterland has been only minimally affected.”¹⁵ The countryside revealed itself in 1958 as forsaken and hibernated. All the stark differences between the pre- and post-war Poland that the visitors enumerated were pertaining to the city life and the new habits and the ways of “urban Poles.” But this was a distorted perspective, although in 1958 only the urban changes were clearly “visible.” The major consequence of the 1939-1948 revolution was the abolition of the formerly sharp city-country dichotomy. Before 1939, urbanites, both poor and rich, were hostile towards peasants, as the latter constituted “potential competitors on the labor market if not directly for them then for their children.” City dwellers thought their culture was superior to the folk one, and especially the urban poor thought the peasants were “exploiting the city by charging high prices for foodstuffs.” When in 1945 cities were literally “opened,” migration to Poland’s largest cities proceeded at an unprecedented pace, and the urban-rural dichotomy, established mainly in the course of the mid-nineteenth industrialization, gradually lost its former salience.¹⁶

I noted in Chapter Three that in 1939 only one-third of the Poland’s population dwelled in cities. In 1966 this exceeded fifty percent. By 1983, the pre-war level was doubled.¹⁷ Given the centuries of urban decline and the veritable “ruralization” of both the Polish landscape and its culture, this was indeed a revolutionary change. It also significantly changed the relation between the city and the country. The post-war urban rush was actually the pinnacle of a century-long phase of industrial urbanization. Between 1868/1871 and 1975, the population living in Poland’s contemporary borders doubled; its urban population increased fivefold, and the population of the largest cities increased eightfold.¹⁸ In that period, Łódź became the very heartland of what was described by geographers as a “monocentric region,”¹⁹ in which the urban-rural divide was conterminous with the divide between Łódź and its surrounding territories. While during the first phase of the growth of the textile industry in the Polish Kingdom (between 1820s and 1860s), urban growth was relatively evenly distributed amongst the various towns, Łódź’s rapid post-1860s expansion was achieved largely by sapping the surrounding countryside and smaller towns. Already in 1869 the Tsar revoked the city

¹⁵ Stanisław Piotrowski, “Wrażenia z podróży do kraju,” *Kultura (Paris)* 6 (1958): 116.

¹⁶ Stefan Nowakowski, *Miasto Polskie W Okresie Powojennym* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1988), 13-14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸ Hanna Imbs, “Miasta w kulturze polski doby przemysłowej,” in *Miasto I Kultura Polska Doby Przemysłowej: Przestrzeń*, ed. Hanna Imbs (Wrocław ; Kraków [etc.]: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988), 87.

¹⁹ Gryzelda Missalowa, *Studia Nad Powstaniem Łódzkiego Okręgu Przemysłowego 1815-1870. Przemysł (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1964), 189, 193-195, Stanisław Liszewski, ed., Zarys Monografii Województwa Łódzkiego: Funkcja Regionalna Łodzi I Jej Rola W Kształtowaniu Województwa (Łódź: Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 2001), 9, 33-34, Jan Fijałek and Ryszard Rosin, eds., Łódź: Dzieje Miasta [The History of Lodz] (Warszawa: PWN, 1980), 237-239, 254-255.*

charter from forty-three Polish towns.²⁰ The very first post-war decade was merely a continuation of that urbanization trend. Cities were “opened” to rural migrants but this was all. War damages impinging the production process were quickly repaired, but virtually no new investments were made. Still in 1968, 34 per cent of machinery at Łódź’s largest cotton mill (formerly Scheibler) came from the period of 1880-1900; another 44 per cent predated 1945, and only 4 per cent was constructed during the 1960s.²¹ By putting all the efforts only at maximizing the potential of already existing resources but not creating new ones, the geographer Adam Ginsbert argued in 1962, Łódź was actually “deprived of the chance to modernize.”²² Stalinist Łódź was the old capitalist Łódź running at full capacity – and becoming increasingly obsolete technologically and uncontrollable socially in the process.

The social problems incurred during the Stalinist “crash industrialization,” as I will discuss presently, ushered in “the necessity for deglomeration,” that was intended to mitigate the previous tendency for “agglomeration.” In 1956 Poland’s largest cities, including, Łódź were officially “closed.” Now in order to settle there one needed a work contract, and in order to get a work contract, one needed to be a registered dweller. This bureaucratic viscous circle was intended at halting the in-migration. This policy, however, was actually not so much making but following trends already in full swing. Just as during the initial eleven post-war months around 220,000 new migrants arrived to Łódź, after 1946 the population growth radically slowed down. For the period between 1946-1960 it was actually nearly two times lower than between 1922 and 1936.²³ Just as previously people migrated to the largest cities, after the 1960s urban growth was channeled mainly into second-tier cities (see Plate Eight). The peak of urban concentration is estimated to have occurred in 1959, when 65.6% of all Polish urbanites lived in the largest cities. Henceforth, the largest and smallest urban centers stagnated in population growth, whereas medium-sized cities grew.²⁴ The real watershed in Polish post-war history (as elsewhere in Europe), therefore, came sometime in the 1960s, rather than in 1989. Post-socialist developments, the geographer Grzegorz Węclawowicz argued, had been “inscribed in space” beforehand; after the fall of state socialism “affluent areas became more affluent, whereas poor ones grew poorer.”²⁵

²⁰ Liszewski, *Zarys Monografii*, 227.

²¹ Wiesław Puś, *Dzieje Łódzkich Zakładów Przemysłu Bawełnianego Im. Obrońców Pokoju “Uniontex” (d[awnych] Zjednoczonych Zakładów K. Scheiblera I L. Grohmana) W Latach 1827-1977* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1979), 330.

²² Ginsbert, *Łódź*, 188.

²³ *Ibid.*, 199.

²⁴ Growth of medium-sized cities is a global trend, see: Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006), 7-11.

²⁵ Grzegorz Węclawowicz, *Przestrzeń I Społeczeństwo Współczesnej Polski: Studium Z Geografii Społeczno-Gospodarczej* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Naukowe PWN, 2002), 76.

The long 1960s

The *making* of these spaces occurred somehow between 1956 and 1980, and especially between the mid 1960s and mid 1970s, when most modern Polish built environment was erected.²⁶ I will refer to this phase as the “long 1960s.”²⁷ While in the West, this period unfolded between circa 1958 and 1974, in the Polish case it seems reasonable to open it with 1956 (de-Stalinisation) and to close with 1976 (working-class unrest against meat price hikes and the beginning of the economic crisis). Most of the remaining chapters, and especially Part Three, will zoom in into the long 1960s. Analyzing the qualitative change that occurred back then is fundamental to understanding the exponential (but largely quantitative) acceleration of uneven development that came after 1989. The period of “crash industrialization” (circa 1950 to 1970) was followed by what the contemporaries called “the second industrial phase” under the aegis of the “scientific and technological revolution” (more on that in Chapter Six), wherein “the urbanization process was more important than industrialization, despite massive investments into productive capacities.”²⁸ Of course often the two phases of Poland’s urban growth (1860s to 1960s, and 1960s to today) overlapped and in the grassroots experience they would often be conflated. Effects of the nineteenth century industrialization became visible in most of the Polish cities only during the interwar period and became fully conspicuous only World War Two. As Aleksander Gieysztor argued, the Polish urban tissue, largely formed during the Renaissance and/or Baroque, remained relatively unaffected by industrialization until the mid twentieth century. Kraków, dominated by its Old City, effectively “hid” its encroaching industrialization well into the interwar period.²⁹ Łódź, and the way urbanization was there clearly linked with industrialization, was, one should bear in mind, entirely untypical for Poland.

The new relation between urbanization and industrialization that the post-1960s phase was marked by explains much of the so-called “under-urbanization” of the putative “socialist city.” By this, Iván Szelenyi described the tendency for urban populations of Eastern Europe to grow slower than of urban job opportunities.³⁰ The very idea of “under-urbanization” assumes that urbanization and industrialization should

²⁶ Andrzej Basista, *Betonowe Dziedzictwo: Architektura W Polsce Czasów Komunistów* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Naukowe PWN, Oddział, 2001), 69.

²⁷ Arthur Marwick, ““1968” and the Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties (c 1958-c. 1974),” in *Transnational Moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989*, ed. Gerd-Rainer Horn and Padraic Kenney (Landham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 81-94.

²⁸ Węclawowicz, *Przestrzeń I Społeczeństwo Współczesnej Polski*, 18.

²⁹ Aleksander Gieysztor, “Tradycja średniowieczna i renesansowa: jej erozja w kulturze miasta przemysłowego,” in *Miasto I Kultura Polska Doby Przemysłowej: Przestrzeń*, ed. Hanna Imbs (Wrocław ; Kraków [etc.]: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988), 22-25.

³⁰ Iván Szelenyi, “Cities under Socialism - and After,” in *Cities After Socialism: Urban and Regional Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, ed. Gregory D Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Iván Szelenyi (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1996), 294-297.

exponentially grow together (as they did in the West up to circa 1950). Already in Chapter One, I argued that this relation has become far more complex than it used to be in the age of industrial cities such as Manchester. During the post-1960s phase of urbanization, both productive and urban growth was no longer concentrated in the largest cities, but it was increasingly dispersed spatially. Just as during the century of “centralized manufacturing” (1860s to 1960s) the countryside (i.e. peasant labor force) was moved to industrial centers, now the “city” (and all its cultural amenities too) was increasingly distributed evenly over the Polish space. The countryside, in other words, was becoming urbanized and industrialized. While in 1950 Poland’s three leading industrial regions centered on Łódź, Katowice and Wrocław gave 60 per cent of Poland’s total industrial input, by 1970 this was reduced to 36 per cent.³¹ The entire 1970-1990 phase, Węclawowicz argued, was therefore one of decentralized production and dispersed urbanization, although as we shall see, the crisis of 1980-1981 radically altered the course assumed during the long 1960s. Hence, the built environment of contemporary Łódź “was essentially formed in two periods: in the 19th century, and during the 1970s.”³² Much of this study is intended to explain what this actually means.

Such development was clearly linked with the way power was being established. The very first phase in the establishment of the Communist rule in Poland was linked with taking over and mobilizing the industrial capacities that were located in Poland’s largest cities. Those who claimed in the late 1950s Polish countryside did not change a jot over the past decades alluded to the fact that the countryside was still largely outside of the state authorities’ control. Collectivization of agriculture, undertaken as a result of Soviet pressures, failed, largely because it was perceived by peasants as a feudal backlash – an attempt to reinstall the manorial system (large estates) that had just been abolished.³³ Unskilled workers preferred to labor in the city rather than in agriculture – in case they had to work for somebody else. The absolute ideal was, of course, working for oneself. Rising land prices further buttressed the already ingrained post-1864 ethos of smallholding. As a peasant from one of the richer parts of the Łódź region explained in the early 1950s, “I have a 60 meters-long plot with rye, 200 meters of potatoes, my own milk. I do not have to listen to the [factory] whistle, I work whenever I want to. I can go to the city whenever I feel like it. Now I have a plenty, everything I need. I do not want a better paradise.”³⁴ Those who wanted a better paradise, the youth, left for cities, and the countryside was demographically relatively aged.

The Communists could only do one of the two: their failure at collectivization of the countryside was the adverse side of their success in Stalinist industrialization.³⁵ The conquest of the countryside came gradually and was executed mainly through

³¹ Węclawowicz, *Przestrzeń I Społeczeństwo Współczesnej Polski*, 18-20.

³² Liszewski, *Zarys Monografii*, 271.

³³ Próchniak, *Kolektywizacja Rolnictwa W Regionie Łódzkim*, 191-192.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 243.

technological innovation and mechanization of agriculture; it took off in earnest only during the 1970s.³⁶ The spread of mass media, as well as the automobile (and the National Bus Service) contributed to that – I will describe this in greater detail in Chapter Eight. The post-1956 industrialization and urbanization of the countryside was therefore expansion of “socialism” onto the largely “reactionary” hinterland. This was a far more complex and daunting endeavor than simply taking over existing factories in cities like Łódź. While the industrial capacities were nationalized nearly right away after the war, the construction industry remained in private hands until the late 1960s.³⁷ There were, for example, private lime stone mines in southern Łódź province still in the early 1960s.³⁸ Only the gradual elimination of small private brickyards, traditional brick-based construction, and expanding industrial production of prefabricated elements allowed for the foregoing second phase of Poland’s urbanization.³⁹

The bane of Stalinism

The Stalinist reality was in many ways a “paradise” for the indigent peasant children. For decades urban labor had been regarded far less a drudgery than agricultural work. Moreover, moving from small and exploitative “hen houses” (*kurniki*) to a larger mill had been considered a privilege; also because such opportunities were not widely accessible: work in large factories was “inherited” within families,⁴⁰ or at best purchased.⁴¹ The sweatshops, largely Jewish-owned, were no longer; some were merged into large enterprises already by the Nazis. Now a veritable market for unskilled labor emerged, and labor turnover was enormous: it was highest amongst the youth, peaking at 25 to 30% annually, significantly impinging on the production process.⁴² Neither skills nor “knowing people” but merely enthusiasm was required. In the stagnating countryside, young ex-peasant sons and daughters had scanty prospects. Łódź, except for jobs, offered them “leisure” too: a concept that tricked down to the countryside only in the late 1960s,⁴³ but had been “in the air” for a number of decades.⁴⁴ There were no more private parks in Łódź where access was denied, or possible only

³⁶ See also: Frances Pine, “Dangerous Modernities? Innovative Technologies and the Unsettling of Agriculture in Rural Poland,” *Critique of Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (June 1, 2007): 183-201.

³⁷ Basista, *Betonowe Dziedzictwo*, 13.

³⁸ Zbigniew Chyliński and Andrzej Mazur, “Pajęczno. Rezerwat kapitalizmu?” [Pajęczno: a reservation for capitalism?] *Odgłosy* 38 (1960): 1, 9, Zbigniew Chyliński and Andrzej Mazur, “Pajęczno. Anegdota i rzeczywistość,” [Pajęczno: between myths and reality] *Odgłosy* 39 (1960): 5.

³⁹ Imbs, “Miasta w kulturze polski doby przemysłowej,” 96.

⁴⁰ Ewa Karpińska, Bronisława Kopczyńska-Jaworska, and Anna Woźniak, *Pracować żeby żyć : żyć żeby pracować* (Warszawa : PWN, 1992), 17, Anna Żarnowska, *Klasa Robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego 1870-1914 [The Polish Working Class, 1870-1914]* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydaw. Naukowe, 1974), 110, 120.

⁴¹ Adam Andrzejewski, ed., *Pamiętniki Bezrobotnych*, 2nd ed. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1967), 234-239.

⁴² Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Preludium. Poznawanie struktury” [A prelude to the study of the Łódź industry] *Odgłosy* 9 (1970): 3, 4.

⁴³ Ewelina Szpak, *Między Osiedlem a Zagrodą: Życie Codzienne Mieszkańców PGR-Ów* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2005), 107.

⁴⁴ See: Nathaniel D. Wood, “Urban Self-Identification in East Central Europe Before the Great War: the Case of Cracow,” *East Central Europe* 33 (2006): 11-31.

after paying a fee. While Sunday strutting on Piotrkowska had been a bourgeois prerogative, now workers could with no sense of shame enter and use spaces previously restricted for the higher classes. Brining the working-class into the inner-city was one of the mainstays of the Stalinist policy.⁴⁵ The post-war social revolution offered indigent youth things people like them could only dream about for generations.

Moreover, the city opened unprecedented opportunities for liberation from one's family: still the basic economic and social unit in the countryside. Already from the very start, peasants migrated alone to Łódź; they either left their families behind, or, if single, married in the city.⁴⁶ Although the patriarchal family still obtained as the ideal, there was a widespread indifference, if not hostility, towards the fathers.⁴⁷ Women often were family heads.⁴⁸ Very few urban families were complete: a typical family in Łódź was one with an absent father. Such "broken families" hardly kept in touch with their rural kin (if they had any).⁴⁹ Many workers were single, and although marriage was considered to be a normal step in one's life, hostility towards single women was far less pronounced in Łódź than in the countryside.⁵⁰ Although textile mills (both large and small) typically employed whole families, still in a large city such as Łódź ties with one's neighbors were far stronger than ties with one's extended family, even if it lived in Łódź. Neighbors were often asked to be the godparents. Weddings and funerals were organized in co-operation with neighbors: since single-room occupancy in working-class neighborhoods was enormously high, celebrations often took place in a number of apartments; typically the whole tenement, if not the entire street, was invited.⁵¹ Although during the antebellum crisis family in Łódź functioned as virtually the only welfare institution,⁵² the war, by breaking many of the families and forcing migrations, fundamentally undermined the institution of the family.⁵³

Post-war demand for manpower was so huge that even inviting laborers from Italy to work in the mining sector was seriously considered.⁵⁴ Very quickly had the Communists realized that the cohort of 4.5 million people aged between fifteen and twenty five, in most part eager to work and "rebuild Poland," was an enormous fulcrum of power. Their souls have been largely won in a battle with the Catholic Church and the "reactionary underground" (in some areas active well into the 1950s). The alliance

⁴⁵ Basista, *Betonowe Dziedzictwo*, 23.

⁴⁶ Żarnowska, *Klasa Robotnicza*, 233-234.

⁴⁷ Karpińska, Kopczyńska-Jaworska, and Woźniak, *Pracować żeby żyć*, 82-83.

⁴⁸ Żarnowska, *Klasa Robotnicza*, 218-236.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 160, 187-188.

⁵⁰ For the latter see Marcel Łoziński, *Żeby nie bolało* [That it doesn't hurt] (Warszawa: Studio Filmowe Kalejdoskop, 1998).

⁵¹ Karpińska, Kopczyńska-Jaworska, and Woźniak, *Pracować żeby żyć*, 55-58.

⁵² Andrzejewski, *Pamiętniki Bezrobotnych*, 200.

⁵³ Alicja Rokuszewska-Pawełek, *Chaos I Przymus: Trajektorie Wojenne Polaków - Analiza Biograficzna* (Łódź: Wydaw. UŁ, 2002).

⁵⁴ Józef Śmiałowski, "Łódzka młodzież w Służbie Polsce" [Łódź youth in the National Service] *Odgłosy* 13 (1968): 2.

between the Communists and youth was a fragile one, however. Just as the former managed to consolidate their grip over the workplace, outside of it they were rather helpless. While the older generation of workers experienced “a crisis of isolation and identity” in the workplace, the young echelon was rather “indifferent” (*olewający*) to the new reality. The labor competition further individualized the workers and alienated them from both the shop floor and urban community. As the industry ran at full capacity and parents spend often 12 hours at work, youth withdrew from community and family life and turned to the street. Between 1949 and 1950 street gangs were formed. Just as juvenile labor force was the “secret” of Stalinism’s success, youth’s activities outside the workplace, dubbed “hooliganism” (sometimes correctly but sometimes not) became its very bane.⁵⁵

Ruralization of cities

Burning Paris but not Łódź

The Nazi blueprint for turning Łódź into the “bulwark” of Germanness in the east, except for cleansing Łódź of its Jewish population, entailed also banishing Poles from the inner-city, and preparing it for the German settlers who were to constitute the new elite of the Nazi metropolis.⁵⁶ After the war ended, the top layer of the Communist administration moved precisely into the houses from which the pre-1939 elite had been evicted, and that were inhabited by the Nazis during the war. “The man whose apartment I got,” one of the Polish literati recalled, “had left everything: furniture, photography albums, undergarment and letters. He suffered of some nasal illness: I found numerous bottles and pipettes in the medicine chest.”⁵⁷ No such intimacy was to be found between the Communists and the Łódź proletariat. Many of the most distinguished Polish intellectuals spend their first post-war years in Łódź.⁵⁸ They lived in a handful of pre-war tenements, with closed gates, and lived highly intensive yet wholly insulated social life. A cutting-edge leftist magazine, the *Kuźnica*, was edited and published in Łódź – yet one could hardly tell this from reading its content. “*Kuźnica* imported its working class exoticism from Silesia,” recalled one of its first editors. “Łódź, engendered by the textile industry, did not resemble a factory town. When shifts changed from invisible factories crowds of workers darted out onto Łódź’s grid-structured streets. Old palaces of the textile magnates were well hidden behind

⁵⁵ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 332.

⁵⁶ Horwitz, *Ghettostadt*, 24, 35.

⁵⁷ Adolf Rudnicki, “Ojczyzna,” in *Tranzjtem Przez Łódź*, ed. Irena Bołtuć-Staszewska (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1964), 95.

⁵⁸ Jerzy Zaruba, *Z Pamiętników Bywalca* (Warszawa: Iskry, 1958), 161-168.

walls.” Łódź seemed to transient, impersonal, crowded and foreign. Therefore, he admitted, “it was difficult [for intellectuals] to muster sympathy for this city.”⁵⁹

The Łódź working-class was indeed not “typical” – the “Polish-Jewish pigsty,” the unusual mixture of German, Polish and Jewish lower orders, was something that Polish post-*szlachta* intellectuals were not accustomed to. But even for the poet Julian Tuwim (1894-1953), born in Łódź into an assimilated middle-class Jewish family, it was easier to establish rapport with Detroit autoworkers during his wartime exile than with the riff-raff Lodzermenschen that he grew up among. After he had been given a standing ovation by some twelve hundred Michigan workers in 1942, Tuwim confessed: “This was the first time in my life that I, a child from Łódź, spoke to workers and they understood me.”⁶⁰ This moment of “great joy” was never to happen again. For Tuwim and most other leftist literati, “Poland’s ashes were seductive,” as Marci Shore recently argued.⁶¹ Ashes were attractive only intellectually, however. One of the young Stalinists recalls walking frantically on Łódź’s streets with Brono Jasiński’s futurist novel, *I burn Paris* under his arm, imbued with the notion that “this here Paris was bound to burn, and on its charred remains us, the liberated inmates, were to erect new life: Communism.”⁶²

The Łódź workers represented to them all they hated about capitalism. The nineteenth century “ideal of Polishness based upon high levels of education and a traditional notion of social and moral conduct,” (the ideology I described under the Jagiellon label in Chapter Two), returned with vengeance already after the war – as David Crowley argued. The Stalinist elite in Poland, he insisted, “despite their pretensions to be the vanguard of the working class, sustained this idealistic through inherently elitist view of culture as an edifying force.” The pursuit of cultured life (*kulturalny*) was promoted as the alternative to the “motley of capitalist city,” and in the wake of the Battle Over Trade, culture was suggested to be the (better) alternative to commerce.⁶³ Before the strategies of inculcating cultural consumption and remaking of the working-class identity became successful after 1956 (I will devote Chapter Six to that), the working-class seemed resistant to the high-brow admonishments. Consequently, the “apostles of the new faith” in Łódź were tormented by the sense of their “absolute isolation in the Sodom.”⁶⁴ The budding Marxist philosopher Leszek Kołakowski, to take a notable

⁵⁹ Tadeusz Drewnowski, “Łódzkie juvenalia,” in *Tranzytem Przez Łódź*, ed. Irena Bołtuć-Staszewska (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1964), 185.

⁶⁰ in: Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 233.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁶² Woroszyński, “Nasza łódzka młodość,” 118, 140, 144, for more on Jasiński see: Shore, *Caviar and Ashes*, 16-22, 63-66.

⁶³ Crowley, “Warsaw's Shops,” 33.

⁶⁴ Woroszyński, “Nasza łódzka młodość,” 136.

example, would never venture onto the streets of Łódź, even in daylight, unless armed with a pocket gun.⁶⁵

The Stalinist Łódź belonged mainly to the proletarian youth. To be sure, there was a lot of “banditism” going on, but most was just proletarian street life. Since there were no official public spaces designated for the youth (such as cafeterias or clubs), they spend most of their time loitering around the city.⁶⁶ Most typically they “hanged out” amidst the debris of the ex-Jewish Bałuty district, or even cemeteries.⁶⁷ Drinking (often in the gateways or alleyways), playing cards and the cinema became their prime pastime, and petty crime and touting cinema tickets was often a source of income. Although the austere socialist realism was proclaimed the official aesthetic dogma, the popular culture of Stalinism was mainly shaped by American *noir* films – that constituted the overwhelming majority of the cinema repertoire at the that time.⁶⁸ Quickly a large part of the unruly youth espoused the “teddy-boy” (*bikiniarze*) subculture wholly at odds with the official moral principles.⁶⁹ Participation in youth movements was dramatically low: even in 1963 there were only 83 scouts and guides in the whole district of Bałuty.⁷⁰

Further, there was the “loose youth” (*luzacy*): school dropouts who did not work. In 1958 they were estimated at eight thousand only in Łódź.⁷¹ Majority was between sixteen and eighteen: they completed the most basic education, but were not old enough to start working.⁷² Juvenile crime rate was in 1960 twice as high as in 1938.⁷³ The Stalinist disregard for the institution of the family and its material hardware now backfired. Workers' hostels, the makeshift solutions to the housing problem, turned into “pockets of demoralization.” The one nicknamed *Pekin* (a generic name for overpopulated spaces⁷⁴) was particularly notorious. Three hundred fifty girls repatriated from Eastern Poland dwelled there, and shared a room in six. They typically worked different shifts, so the room was busy all night and day. They were “overwhelmed by the whirl of play, pleasures, and unrefined love affairs” and instead of attending evening schools, they “immersed themselves into the pleasures of metropolitan life.”

⁶⁵ I owe this point to Jacek Kochanowicz (personal communication, 13 October 2008).

⁶⁶ Andrzej Makowiecki “Płynie wino, grają saksofony” [Wine, play and music] *Odgłosy* 39 (1969): 1, 5.

⁶⁷ Jerzy Pilichowski “Czternaście twarzy starówki” [The foreteen faces of the old town] *Odgłosy* 17 (1974): 1, 6. See also Jerzy Kosinski, *The Painted Bird*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1979), 246-247.

⁶⁸ Rafał Marszałek, *Kino Rzeczy Znalezionych* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2006), 149-150.

⁶⁹ Crowley, “Warsaw's Shops,” 28.

⁷⁰ “Najgorzej na Bałutach” [It's worst in Bałuty] *Odgłosy* 17 (1963): 8.

⁷¹ It was estimated that in 1965 there would be “nearly a million” of “loose youth” in the whole of Poland; Wiesław Jażdżyński, “Młodości gdzieżeś skrzydełka podziała?” [Youth: where are your wings?] *Odgłosy* 43 (1960): 1, 5.

⁷² This structural problem was solved only in 1969, when an educational reform made it compulsory to attend school until one the age of eighteen.

⁷³ Andrzej Mazur, “Tawerna” [The tavern] *Odgłosy* 16 (1958): 1, 5.

⁷⁴ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 60.

Many had their boyfriends over. Soon some of the boyfriends, now husbands, started living with them. And so did their small children.⁷⁵

The housing situation was generally getting ever direr. Although population density in 1956 was slightly lower than in 1939, the actual dwelling conditions were worse. Virtually no investments into housing were made since 1939. The Nazis had pushed workers to lower quality housing, and those who stayed often demolished their homes to lower the standard and hence escape evictions. After 1945 the best housing was turned into office space for the expanding state administration. To compensate the loss, many previously uninhabited spaces like attics, basements (both *suterena* and *piwnica*), drying rooms, or even cubbyholes (*komórka*) were turned into dwellings.⁷⁶ Volatility of housing in Stalinist Poland is perhaps best captured by an image from Bałuty, where an old oil mill was turned into a dwelling. Forty families shared what used to be the shop floor. Yet, there were no walls between the “apartments” only a chalk line “demarcating the sleep of one family from the sleep of another one.”⁷⁷ Many other families shared “normal” apartments too, common use of kitchen and other spaces triggered conflicts. The basic housing unit used by the authorities was not an apartment, but a chamber. Although there were many privately-owned apartments, municipality typically administered the remaining ones, and these were regarded as being “for free.” Hence chambers were relatively easy to swap, and that further intensified the movement. As a result, without any construction, the real number of single-room apartments in Łódź increased after 1945. This in turn only undermined the “nurturing” role of the family – because children could not stay in their overcrowded homes, they went out on the street.

Terrible urbanite material

Soon after the new attitude of youth indifference was becoming ever more widespread, the erosion of the pre-war work ethic was being lamented. Łódź’s most burning problem, a journalist stressed, was the “lack of factory artisans” who traditionally cared for their workstations and factories. The new workers only perform their tasks during their eight-hours shift (*odwalają robotę*) and “care about nothing. If he can get a better salary elsewhere, he’ll ditch the job immediately.” The remedy for that was, in his view, to be found in facilitating a “dialog between the industry and the city” wherein the former maximizes profits and production, whereas the latter “is there to improve peoples’ lives.”⁷⁸ This was easier said than done. Anti-urbanism, as I described in Chapter Three, was deep-seated in Poland. The problem of how to make people feel “at

⁷⁵ Czesław Garda and Władysław Rymkiewicz, “Tak zwany Pekin” [The so-called *Pekin*] *Odgłosy* 37 (1958): 8; Tadeusz Szewera, “Kobiety z hotelu” [Women from the hostel] *Odgłosy* 20 (1958): 3.

⁷⁶ Janusz Weychert, “Spójrzmy prawdzie w oczy” [Let’s face it] *Odgłosy* 42 (1958): 1, 2, 9.

⁷⁷ Zbigniew Kwiatkowski, “Gdzie padają kule,” in *Ucieczka Przedmieścia*, ed. Wiesław Jazdzyński (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1963), 44-45.

⁷⁸ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Wszystko o Łodzi” [All about Łódź] *Odgłosy* 2 (1960): 1, 3. See also: Konrad Frejlich, Marek Regel “Efemery” *Odgłosy* 27 (1959): 1, 6.

home” in cities that, as Dąbrowska bluntly put it, were “not ours,” (and hence hosted merely “stinking scum”) became a subject of a lively discussion.

The most common argument in the debate was that Poles did not regard themselves as the righteous owners of cities (*gospodarz miasta*) because of their peasant (and more specifically serf) background. In Polish scholarship this has been described as “ruralization of the city” argument. It is a subject that virtually no book in Polish urban studies can eschew.⁷⁹ Although most Poles live an urban life, the argument goes, mentally they are still wedded to the agricultural world; this is why cities seem distant and alienating to them. Poles, in other words, by default make a terrible urbanite material. Although this debate started in the 1950s and was, as I will discuss below, tightly intertwined in the politics of that period, the conundrum of ruralization of Polish cities has not been unraveled to this very day. This is how the mayor of Łódź explained his city’s notorious “placelessness” in an official interview from 2000: “Łódź has been plagued by its uprootedness. There has never been a community here. People in Łódź simply do not know how to co-operate. Jewish tourists from Israel look at Łódź’s tenements with much greater fondness than the people who actually dwell in them.” Soon after the war, he pointed out, rural migrants arrived to Łódź. “Women still wore peasant dresses. They cultivated microscopic plots on balconies of art nouveau tenements, only not to lose their ties with country life.”⁸⁰

My argument is that there was nothing “essential” or cosmological about the alleged incompatibility of Polishness and urbanism. True, the Jagiellon anti-urbanism was prominent in the Polish culture. But we have to bear in mind that intellectuals did not wield such as great power that they might have hoped for, and their impact on the rank-and-file population was at best limited. To be sure, the ex-serf “bumpkins” did not know the “right” way of living an urban life – but the point is that this “correct” way was in the making. In the course of that process, the “ruralization” argument was used to deprive the new urbanites of their right to the city. The most widespread argument in support of the “ruralization” thesis was that new migrants “misused” the urban infrastructure and hence were first to blame for the indeed terrible dilapidation of the housing stock.⁸¹ Just as during Stalinism housing was practically free, in 1958 rents were raised – precisely in order to cherish people’s respect for and commitment to the facilities they used.

According to the publicist Jan Adamecki, who was virtually the only person arguing against that prejudice, this was precisely the reason “behind the emergence of the many

⁷⁹ Marcin Czerwiński, *Życie Po Miejsku* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1974), 154-158, for the Soviet Union see: Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 162-163, 244.

⁸⁰ Marek Czekalski, “Oni nie są kmicicami” [They are no gentleman: interview by Paweł Smoleński], *Gazeta Wyborcza* (12 June 2000): 19.

⁸¹ See for example: Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 82, 86.

voices trying to justify this undoubtedly correct and necessary decision – but to justify in an erroneous and opaque way. Above all, a malicious view is being distributed that most residents devastate the space they inhabit – they keep coal, poultry or even pigs in bathrooms of their new apartments. That such incidents occur is of course plausible – yet highly untypical for Łódź. What is typical, however, are the assiduously polished floors and, as a result of dampness, whole pieces of plaster falling off the walls and ceilings.” Even the newly built apartments were in a deplorable condition, Adamiecki and many others reported. A three storey apartment block built in 1950 had a roof leaking from the very beginning. As a result, after eight years, these new apartments “resembled musty and moldy hovels.” Not only people had to live amongst many bowls scattered around the floor collecting dripping water, but they invested their private money into a constant renovation of the apartment they lived in. It was therefore more the authorities rather than the inhabitants themselves, Adamiecki argued, who succumbed to the dictum “it’s state-owned and not mine” (*nie moje lecz państwowe*) and contributed to the ruin of the city’s housing stock.

Adamiecki suggested that only decentralization of decision-making can turn people into real owners (*gospodarz*) of the city.⁸² Indeed, the post-war institutional vacuum brought a glaring absence of communal policy. It was partially dictated by the ownership structure: because a significant portion of the old housing stock remained in private hands (Łódź’s inner-city was described as “semi-private”⁸³), the state was disinterested in investing into private property. A journalist estimated that there were 20,000 private house owners in Łódź – and they typically had to host lodgers who hardly paid a rent, and hence the owners had scarce resources to maintain the buildings.⁸⁴ The link between the “trouble with property” and deterioration of the housing is well visible in the devaluation of the job of janitors (*dozorca*). Before 1939, tenement owners hired janitors to both maintain the property (they cleaned the floors and so forth) and supervise its use by the inhabitants. Because janitors charged for many of their services (such as opening doors at night) it used to be a relatively lucrative job. It ceased being so after 1945. Now it was one of the typical underpaid jobs taken by new migrants, and, since nobody wanted to pay them for their extra services, they gave up on maintenance. Now most tenement gates were wide open during the night, and vibrant street life poured into gateways and staircases. A couple taking a bath on a corridor was not uncommon sight.⁸⁵ Of course there was nobody to maintain these “nobody’s spaces,” and these were the main object of what was called “vandalism.”⁸⁶

⁸² Jan Adamowski, “Bezpańskie domy czyli gospodarz pilnie poszukiwany” [Houses urgently looking for an owner] *Odgłosy* 18 (1958): 2.

⁸³ Wojciech Adamiecki, “Kłopoty z własnością” [Problems with ownership] *Odgłosy* 16 (1965): 4.

⁸⁴ Feliks Bąbol “Jest ich 20 tysięcy” [There’s 20,000 of them] *Odgłosy* 37 (1962): 1, 8.

⁸⁵ See also Roman Polański, *Uśmiech Zębiczny* [Toothy smile] (Łódź: PWSFTviT, 1957).

⁸⁶ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 64-73.

From serfs to ‘owners’

One could hear clarion calls for “taking back the city” from many sides. In most part, journalists denounced the “widespread indolence and apathy”⁸⁷ and urged grassroots activism. “There is no better teacher” one of them called, “of how to stimulate our respect for what had recently become our common property (*wzajemny dorobek*) and how to foster owner-like attitude of care and responsibility than turning to things in our closest proximity: our houses, streets and cities.”⁸⁸ This is why when a workers’ community living on the city’s fringe marshaled its members and, of their own accord, built a road so they could reach the inner-city by city bus (“we are deprived of cultural entertainment” they argued in their petition “there is no meat store in our vicinity and often there is not enough breadstuffs for everybody”), the journalist Andrzej Brycht praised them: “They have donated nearly two thousand working hours to the state – because they well understood that the state actually comprises of them” (*państwo to i oni sami*). Such was, he regretted, still a minority attitude. “When will we finally stop approaching” our cities, he asked, “from the perspective of hotel guests, and become its real owners (*rzeczywiści gospodarze*), who understand the problems of our age and who know how to face them?”⁸⁹ Some new institutions such as the Association for Łódź (*Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Łodzi*) was aimed at overcoming such “traditionally” passive attitude towards urban space. “If you love your city (and you certainly do, as it is a good city)” agitated one of its founders, “and if you want it to become ever more beautiful (I’m sure you do) and if you want its dwellers to live a more cultured and more diverse life (who wouldn’t?), then join us!”⁹⁰

Initially, cries for somebody to “claim” the city often pointed in the direction of factories. Just as the figure of the factory director was in the very core of the 1945-1947 contention because the new directors were perceived to be equivalents of pre-war mill owners, now the state-owned enterprises (rather than the abstract institution of the state as such) were duly expected to continue the pre-war tradition of factory paternalism. Journalists argued that co-operation between various enterprises, in a constant “dialogue” with the city, could use their role of local patrons for making their employees feel more as city-owners (*gospodarze miasta*) and not what they used to be so far – “passive observers of city’s development.”⁹¹ Some enterprises, like the leading garment producer Olimpia, did not have to be urged. Already before 1956, its management was keen on paternalistic policies, and had relied in recruiting on the Voluntary Labor Troops (*Ochotniczy Hufiec Pracy*). The Troops sent three hundred girls to Olimpia, and the factory placed them in the infamous *Pekin*. From the very start,

⁸⁷ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁸ Zdzisław Kozłowicz, “Moja mała agitacja” [I am in favor] *Odgłosy* 46 (1959): 10, 11.

⁸⁹ Andrzej Brycht, “Są prorocy w naszym kraju” [The pioneers in our cities] *Odgłosy* 28 (1959): 1, 3.

⁹⁰ Zdzisław Kozłowicz, “Moja mała agitacja.”

⁹¹ Julia Poklewska, “Czy budownictwo zakładowe jest piątym kołem u wozu?” [What about housing built by employers?] *Odgłosy* 6 (1959): 10.

Olimpia management tutored them into virtually every aspect of urban life. For example the girls allegedly did not know how to deal with money: typically they spend their whole salaries in three days, and then had nothing. So the management bought them clothing, and then subtracted the costs from their payroll. Or the girls would buy the “wrong” type of food, and as a result suffered from malnourishment, as their manager explained, “so Olimpia had to get interested in what they were eating.”

By the mid 1950s, many of these girls had babies, and their new role of mothers could be also exploited for wedding them to their employer, and hence stabilizing the workforce (this was important for improving the quality of production). New “material base” was for necessary for that. In 1957 Olimpia’s middle rung administration took up an initiative and built an apartment block for its workers. Yet, because access to state-owned plots was very competitive, and individual enterprises had a weak bargaining position *vis-à-vis* the central administration, Olimpia had no choice but to build in the very heart of Łódź’s old inner-city.⁹² The positive side was that this reduced the costs (building new infrastructure for utilities amounted to one-third of all construction expenses), and as the municipal water and heating networks were not as yet widely accessible,⁹³ all these amenities were actually provided by an adjacent cotton mill (that in return placed some of its workers there). Yet, this was hardly a success: initially workers were hesitant to sign up for flats, and when the very first inhabitants hoped to move in, they were welcome by a human wall comprising of “militant old biddies” (*opór babskiej armii*) that required the police to brake.⁹⁴ After all, the new urbanites constituted only one-third of Łódź’s population, and the remaining part represented the pre-war echelon dominant especially in the inner-city. They lost their foothold in the industry, but kept their strong position in the city. Łódź’s working-class communities, as I will describe in more detail in Chapter Six, were both consolidated and defiant. Therefore individual initiatives such as that of Olimpia were doomed to die aborning.

The dialog of city and industry

The family principle

The task of turning unruly youth into mothers (and fathers) was too daunting to be accomplished by a single enterprise such as Olimpia. Not surprisingly, Olimpia built all its future apartment blocks outside of the inner-city, and with the aid of housing co-operatives that embarked on large-scale construction in a country-wide campaign. Also, recruiting via the Voluntary Labor Troops was mobilizing really the most “latent” of resources – orphans or young refugees from the ethnic cleansing that unfolded on the

⁹² On Wólczańska 126.

⁹³ For example just as in 1946 only 1.6% of residential houses were connected to the communal pipeline, in 1960 this was already 21.1%, see: Ginsbert, *Łódź*, 250.

⁹⁴ Leszek Witczak, “O tym jak zamiast kaktusa wyrósł blok robotniczy.”

Polish-Ukrainian frontier.⁹⁵ By the mid 1950s, it turned out that in Łódź demand for unskilled female labor dangerously outstripped the supply. Two solutions to this “spoiled labor market” were found. First, workers previously organized mainly into neighborhood communities were now to be individualized, divided into families, and placed in suburban housing. Second, enterprises that sought to improve the quality of their production (and this mainly depended upon having a stable workforce) moved out to the province’s second or even third-tier cities, where there was abundant young female labor force. They would be still disciplined by the families they lived with; in such relatively remote areas a single factory could enjoy a real monopoly over the local job market, and gradually wed its workforce to the factory by expanding its role of a “local patron.” This is how both urban and productive dispersal described before was actually the counteraction to the *de facto* juvenile workers’ control over the urban labor market and the persisting grit and determination of the inner-city working-class community. The entire move towards the ruralization of industrial production as well as suburbanization of the largest cities, was therefore dictated by the inability of the Communist authorities to use existing space for bringing to heel people who inhabited it. Hence the need to create new spaces and new places.

Therefore already in the early 1950s, a plan for reducing the population of Łódź’s inner-city from 220,000 to 160,000 was prepared. Both surplus population and some industry would be moved to new districts located on city’s outskirts. Just as the old Łódź was mainly stretched along the north-south axis, now the new districts would balance what one poet described as “Łódź’s narrow hips” that gave the city its “rachitic” structure.⁹⁶ A large residential district West of the inner-city was originally planned to accommodate 160,000 dwellers.⁹⁷ This direction of suburbanization was taken due to the “large land reserves (mainly state-owned), healthy environment, and relative easiness of territorial development” west of the inner-city. Suburbanization plan also entailed a change in the family structure: there ought to be “less households comprising of one or two members or more than five, and more households comprising of four members.”⁹⁸ A radical change of the family structure was a task beyond the capacities of a single factory. Therefore a national pro-family campaign was launched in 1956 – and it was a clear reversal of the Stalinist policies.⁹⁹

The problem of unruly youth was no longer phased in terms of hooliganism (mindless devastation of the city) but as an encroaching “crisis of the institution of the family.” “Unlike the Catholic Church, we have underestimated the significance of the family” a journalist sounded the alarm in a city-wide discussion, and advocated for placing the

⁹⁵ See also: Kazimierz Karabasz “Rok Franka W.” (Warsaw: Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych, 1967).

⁹⁶ Jan Szaundynger: “O rachityczna Łodzi” In: Ziemowit Skibiński and Barbara Stelmaszczyk-Świontek, eds., *Kwiaty Łódzkie: Antologia Poezji O Łodzi* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1982), 168.

⁹⁷ Today known as Retkinia.

⁹⁸ “Miasto, w którym żyć będziemy” [The city that we’ll be living in] *Odgłosy* 45-46 (1958): 1, 3, 5.

⁹⁹ Klich-Kluczevska, *Przez Dziurkę Od Klucza*, 100.

family in the very heart of the authorities' concern. Most voices in the family debate were unanimous: there was an affinity between juvenile crime, "demoralization" and deteriorating housing stock. Institution of the family, to be effective, had to be buttressed by a new material base. "The pertinence of family is a sociological fact," one of them argued. "Family is the source of nation's social vitality, the basic consumption unit, and the elementary educational cell. These facts should not be overlooked when building a political system, and especially the socialist one."¹⁰⁰ Now people would be disciplined by suburbanization of this "elementary collective." This national pro-family campaign was translated in Łódź into a campaign against the nightshift (*trzecia zmiana*). If 100,000 of Łódź's mothers worked the evening and/or the nightshift, and hence returned home at irregular hours, and if at least half of them had children, a journalist speculated, then "at least 50,000 families in Łódź have a serious problem."¹⁰¹

This problem was solved by suburbanization: if people no longer dwelled in "inhumane conditions," and children, for example, would have their own rooms, or at least could sleep in a room different from their parents, then juvenile crime would decrease. In the old tenements, they often shared sleeping space, and this was believed to be a source of youth's demoralization. Now youth would have proper conditions to do their homework, and hence there would be less drop-outs, and the school, together with youth organizations, would be more effective in organizing their leisure time. Further, the "elementary collective" of the family was to function as an accumulation unit. *Dorobek* – getting established materially, functions best when people are organized as families – another publicist noted. The pro-family campaign and new housing investments have very quickly brought the divorce rate down. "Washing machines and the television set strengthen the solid character of the family-centered structure of the whole society," he concluded. "They create a new type of a cage, wherein people, now as families, swarm with astonishing enthusiasm. And objects such as the television set further solidify the family by closing it within the four walls."¹⁰²

Suburbanization of Łódź was mainly state-run, or, to be more precise, the co-operative housing movement that built most of the new housing was throughout the 1950s and 1960s increasingly taken over by the state and deprived of its initial autonomy and grassroots character.¹⁰³ Individual enterprises, however, were not passive. Leading manufactures, such as the man's shirts producer Wólczanka, quickly realized they will not shift the emphasis from "quantity" to "quality" with Łódź's volatile and "spoiled" labor market. In second- and even third-tier cities, however, the situation was different. This is where Wólczanka moved its production in the 1960s. Research revealed that the Łódź province was abundant in (largely female) labor anxious to work in apparel and

¹⁰⁰ Henryk Dinter, "Przed wszystkim wychowanie" [Education above all] *Odgłosy* 44 (1960): 5.

¹⁰¹ Wiesław Jażdżyński, "Sprawy rodzinne" [Family affairs] *Odgłosy* 42 (1960): 1, 6, 7.

¹⁰² Zbigniew Chyliński, "Rodzina jak ją widzę" [Family as I see it] *Odgłosy* 41 (1960): 1, 4.

¹⁰³ Krzysztof Madej, *Spółdzielczość Mieszkaniowa: Władze PRL Wobec Niezależnej Inicjatywy Społecznej (1961-1965)*, W Krainie PRL (Warszawa: Trio, 2003), 73, 128.

textiles.¹⁰⁴ Now sites like the railway junction town Koluszki were deemed to be the “places for the future.” Koluszki’s population was on average below thirty, *Odgłosy* marveled, yet its youth was uninterested in metropolitan pleasures: “youth in small towns is tough and unspoiled by the coffee house existentialism (*kawiarniany egzystencjalizm*). It has a realist outlook on life. It appreciates only tangible things: a motorcycle, an automobile, a house ... And it knows that in order to obtain such riches, it has to work and earn well. Here everybody knows everybody. People feel that the city is their own (*miasto jest ich własnością*). This is where initiatives blossom!”¹⁰⁵ Initially, industrial deglomeration moved along the railway network, but soon the expansion of automobiles and motorcycles, together with National Bus Company (*PKS*), made further penetration possible.¹⁰⁶

Industrialization moved to the southern, and most “underdeveloped,” parts of the province, where the textile industry, as I suggested in Chapter Three, did not take root in the nineteenth century because of the relatively strong position of the local peasantry. As the wartime revolution triggered a national trend towards “getting established materially,” and as deglomeration offered “additional” income for peasant families (as we remember key for social mobility), rural population was being gradually drawn into the production process. The textile and apparel industries have always relied on the labor of daughters living in their parents’ households;¹⁰⁷ and these were now to be found mainly in the south and west of the Łódź province. There was a long tradition of female migrant labor (to Germany) in that area, and the cash the daughters brought had always been administered by the fathers.¹⁰⁸ Although it was said that peasant girls hired in Wólczanka’s new mills worked only to have the money for “lipsticks and dresses,” it seems that they too were giving their salaries back to their parents.¹⁰⁹ The advantage of this was that their wages could be kept at the minimal level. The drawback was, however, that daughters’ loyalty to their families often impinged on the production process. The girls were, for example, “unaware” that they cannot come twenty minutes late, and then simply make up for it. This is why Wólczanka brought a group of experienced workers from Łódź who were the tutor the apprentice girls. In the new factory in Łask, half of Wólczanka’s workforce was between 18 and 21 years old and

¹⁰⁴ Halina Mortimer-Szymczak, ed., *Łódź: Rozwój Miasta W Polsce Ludowej*, 1st ed. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1970), 130-132. For example in the Wieluń county labor surplus was estimated at 12,000 people, see Jan Babiński, “Wieluń patrzy na Łódź” [Wieluń stares at Łódź] *Odgłosy* 16 (1960): 1, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Andrzej Norbert, “Koluszki” *Odgłosy* 42 (1959): 1, 6.

¹⁰⁶ This influenced the land prices too: for example in Kłomnice, near Radomsko, 0,7 acres of land cost in 1959 70,000 złoty, and for the same money one could get 4 hectares of land in a village 10 km away, but with no fast train connection to industrial sites, Gustaw Holub, “Ziemia dzielona toporem” [Land divided with an axe] *Odgłosy* 48 (1959): 2.

¹⁰⁷ In late 19th century, daughters were estimated to constitute up to 40% of the entire labor force in the Łódź textiles, Żarnowska, *Klasa Robotnicza*, 218.

¹⁰⁸ Jan Ochedzan, “Fragmenty pamiętnika” [Diaries] *Odgłosy* 2 (1970): 8, 9; for more on family and industrialization, see: Don Kalb, *Expanding class: power and everyday politics in industrial communities, The Netherlands, 1850-1950* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁹ Konrad Frejdlich, “Przyczółek” [The stronghold] *Odgłosy* 16 (1968): 5.

commuted from adjacent villages. The remaining echelon was older, married, urban and committed to the factory as if they were their “owners” (*gospodynie zakładu*). The “core” workers tutored in morality too, since, as they claimed, the youth’s “conduct was not all that good”, and some girls even had abortion twice a year (factory soon employed a gynecologist too).¹¹⁰

Still absenteeism and lateness were the most burning problems: many girls actually hitchhiked to work. Running a factory bus service was not an effective solution, because workers were really scattered around the area. Hence, Wólczanka started offering loans, so the young workers could buy apartments in the towns of Łask and Poddębice. Moving the labor force out of the peasant family was also important for the long-term stability of production. Peasant daughters would typically disappear from the workplace for the harvest season. And by becoming mothers themselves and settling permanently in a town, they would become further committed to their workplace. All this was a gradual process: initially Wólczanka’s management hoped to restore the quality of production attained in Łódź within the first two years after having moved the production lines to Łask and Poddębice.¹¹¹ It was in such small towns that enterprises like Wólczanka was the provider of over 20 per cent of local jobs, could discipline the workforce by the old methods of factory paternalism, and gradually remade the so-called “peasant-workers”¹¹² into petty town proletariat. The towns of Łask, Poddębice just as the expanded medium-sized towns in the Łódź province such as Bełchatów have retained their industrial character well into the 2000s, when a wave of foreign direct investment-based industrialization moved again to the largest cities, including Łódź (more on that in Chapter Nine).¹¹³

Widzew versus Bałuty

The quirk of irony is that the term used for the “owner” of urban space was *gospodarz*. If the reader remembers Anzelm Gostomski, the author of husbandry manuals I mentioned in Part One, then he was one of the first ones to popularize the notion. *Gospodarz* was in the sixteenth century the ideal of a grain entrepreneur – both production “manager” and a merchant. In the moment of the expansion of the curse of Ham, *gospodarz*, denoting an owner of land, stood for the very opposite of *cham* – somebody who, as the reader may remember, was disinherited and barred from accumulation. The post-war polonization of cities, therefore, unfolded against the backdrop of categories of property that were deeply ingrained in the *ancien régime*. But this was not merely “lagging behind.” This nonsynchronism played an important role,

¹¹⁰ Bogna Madej, “Wólczanka” *Odgłosy* 44 (1966): 1, 3.

¹¹¹ Konrad Frejdlich, “Przyczółek,”

¹¹² In the 1970s they were often referred to by a “neutral” term of bi-professional workers (*dwuzawodowi*)

¹¹³ Liszewski, *Zarys Monografii*, 248.

in which the cunning of class operated in a new material milieu but according to its old rules. This is very clear in the way suburbanization actually started in Łódź.

We see clearly how the “ruralization of cities” argument was used arbitrarily and against the new urban population in the equivocal housing policies. Already during the early 1950s, because the war damages most heavily affected Bałuty (where the Litzmandstadt Ghetto was located), that district was slated for renewal. But rebuilding Bałuty was also seen as crucial for the elimination of hooliganism and disciplining of the unruly youth. Bałuty, often compared to London’s Whitechapel, has had a vile reputation.¹¹⁴ According to a Polish journalist, Bałuty’s gritty crooked streets, its tumbledown and overpopulated houses represented a “human waste heap;” the industrial Łódź “spat out onto Bałuty everything that was too weak to find a place in the inner-city.”¹¹⁵ Bałuty was Łódź’s prime symbol of all that was “miserable, dirty, squalid, and shoddy. Bałuty stood for all what represented disorder, cheap glitter, chaos and the gutter of old small towns of the Russian Empire.”¹¹⁶ Bałuty was Hassidic through-and-through but also it hosted many seasonal workers, both Polish and Jewish, who stood at the very bottom of the labor hierarchy. Bałuty’s population subsisted on a “steady diet of grits with potatoes and barely fried not in fat but in oil.” Consequently, “the area’s rickety, bloated, bowlegged, malnourished children dropped like flies from lack of proper food and fresh air; the women suffered from excessive childbearing; the men ruined their lungs with the eternal dust and stinking fumes from old rags used for waste or recycled yarn.”¹¹⁷

The worst of all in Bałuty, Singer noted, “were the subcontractors, petty bosses who operated home workshops where they contracted to do piecework for the factory owners.” They bullied and exploited their journeymen, who lodged with their families. Subcontractor’s wife was to feed the workers, but usually she gave out bread bought from soldiers “which was so stale and inferior that it could be consumed only a little at a time.” They worked in the dim light. “When the red eyelids could no longer be held open, the men stretched out on the dirty floor with a piece of goods as a pillow and dozed off, freezing in the winter, steaming in the summer, eaten alive by fleas, and bedbugs.” While sleeping, the “dye from the cheap materials ran so that they awoke looking like chimney sweeps.” Of course, they were not being paid in cash but in promissory notes. And often they were not paid at all. “And when the finished goods were ready for delivery, the workers had to tote them on their shoulders across all Łódź since no subcontractor would think of wasting money on a droshky.”¹¹⁸

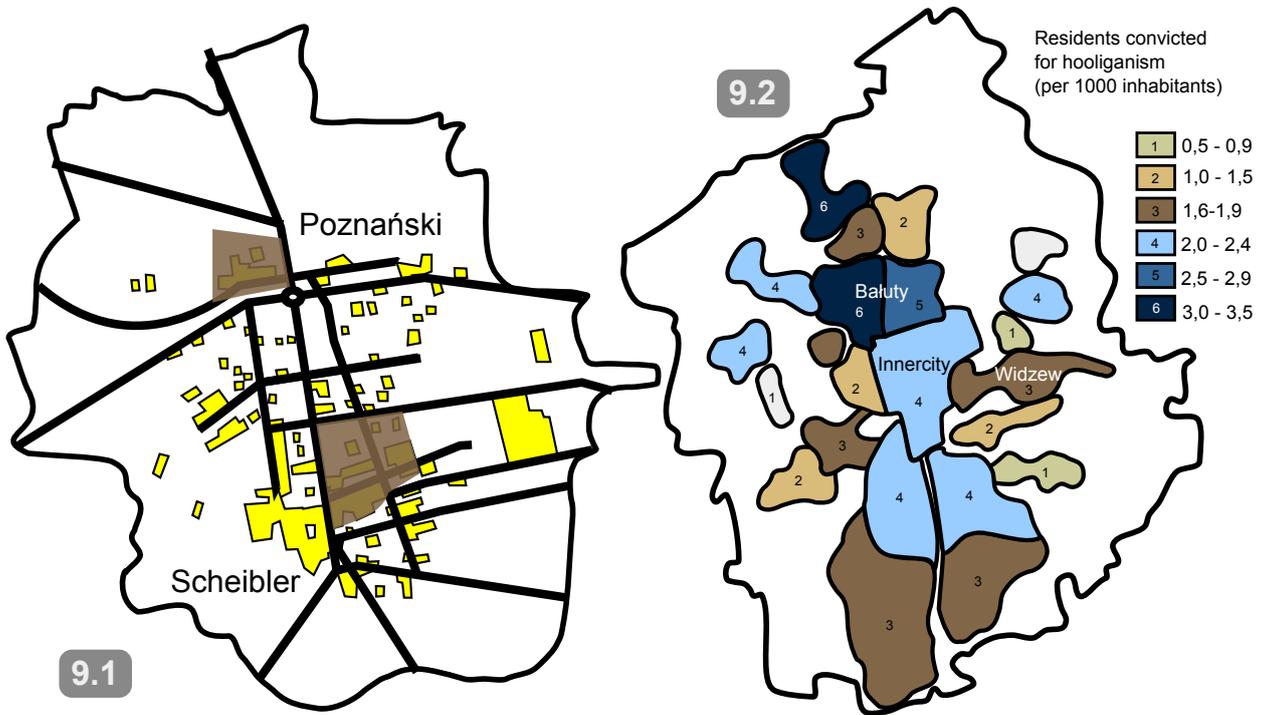
¹¹⁴ See for example, Stefan Gorski in: Konrad Frejdlich, ed., *Uśmiech Ariadny: Antologia Reportażu łódzkiego* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1975), 44.

¹¹⁵ Zbigniew Kwiatkowski, *Gdzie padają kule*, 47.

¹¹⁶ Jan Bąbiński “Anty-Bałuty” [The anti-Bałuty] *Odgłosy* 19 (1965): 1, 3.

¹¹⁷ Singer, *The brothers Ashkenazi*, 113-114.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 117-118.



Łódź's "petty kingdoms" of Isaak Poznański and Karl Schiebler (marked in brown) and other industrial sites circa 1913 (marked in yellow).

Source: Adam Ginsbert, Łódź

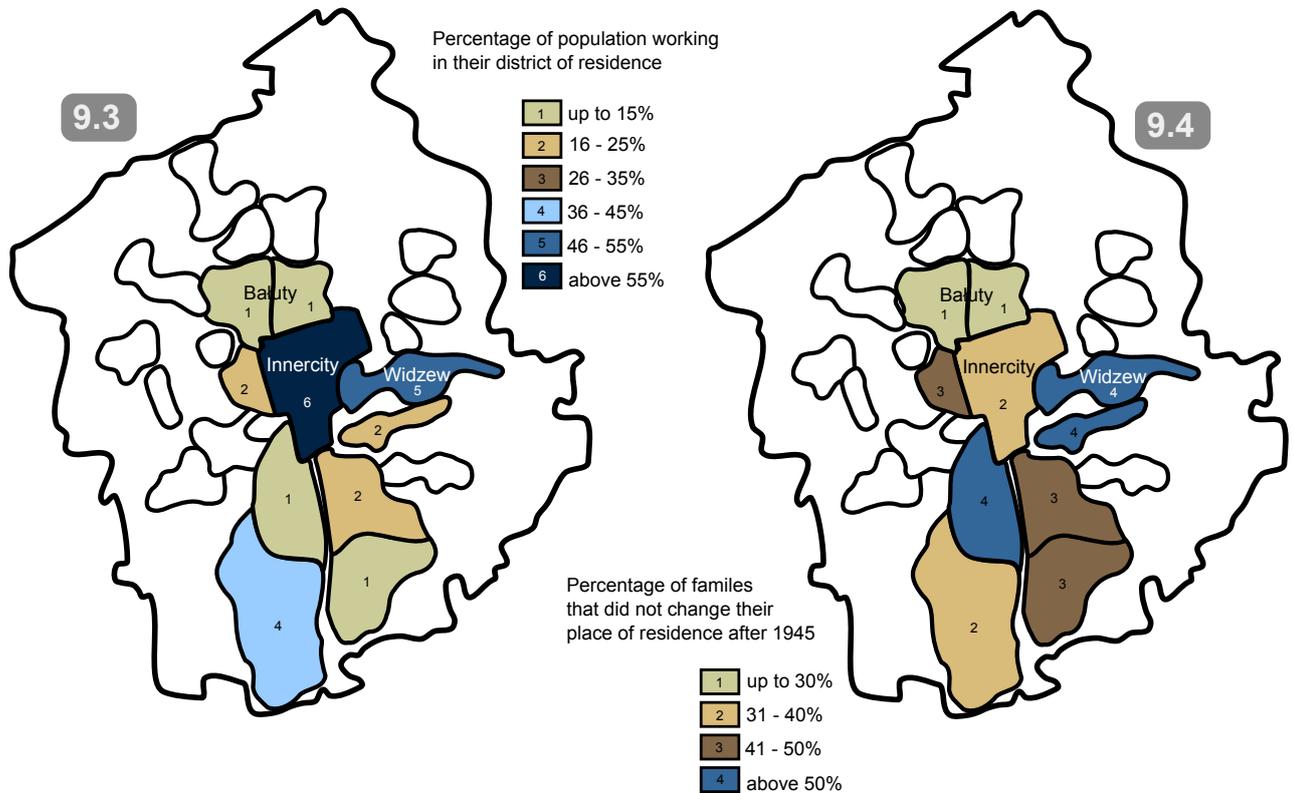


Plate nine Łódź of the past (Widzew) and Łódź of the future (Bałuty)

Source: Waław Piotrowski, Społeczno-przestrzenna struktura m. Łodzi, Wrocław, 1966.

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Although Bałuty was a part of the Łódź industrial organism, it was incorporated into its administrative borders only during World War One. Except for exploitative bosses, Bałuty was notorious for its gangs. “They extorted money from servant girls for the privilege of strolling through the woods on the Sabbaths. If a worker tried to walk with a girl, he would be approached by a tough claiming that the girl was his fiancée and demanding payment of a ruble under threat of a beating.”¹¹⁹ During the 1904-1907 revolution, Singer claimed, Bałuty was taken over by the socialists. At the eve of the June 1905 revolt, “all the walls [in Bałuty] were plastered with revolutionary proclamations that the police no longer bothered to tear down.” Labor exchanges, where the Bałuty workers meet, were “seethed with activity. Weavers, spinners, hosiers, seamstresses, tailors, cobblers in modern garb and in long gabardines milled about while union representatives held meetings, planned strikes, distributed literature, collected dues.”¹²⁰ The Jewish proletariat from Bałuty, as I described already in Chapter Three, was heavily involved in the struggle against Tsarism on Łódź’s street barricades in 1905. Yet Singer’s portrait of the “revolutionary” Bałuty seems slightly exaggerated – as I stressed already, political parties (including the Jewish ones) were extraordinarily weak in Łódź in at the turn of the centuries. Not surprisingly, once revolutionary and “criminal” elements quickly started merging in the wake of the June struggles, Bałuty was ruled again by its gangs.

As a Russian journalist reported in 1907, after leaving “the quarters of Łódź proper, one dashes into complete darkness in Bałuty. There is no single street lamp on its narrow and crooked streets. This is where the hungry factory people dwells, and one seldom encounters an military patrol here. They have their own patrols, own chains, and own sentries here.”¹²¹ Since 1932, the Łódź municipality sought to combat the gangs in Bałuty, and for example arrested and sentenced a number of gangs members.¹²² But gangs still extorted fees for letting cargo pass through Bałuty to the inner-city, and organized the commerce at the Bałuty Market – the very heart of the district. They “supervised the supply of goods, regulated the prices, extorted protection money, and ruined the ones who broke out.”¹²³ The Litzmannstadt ghetto, as one of the Polish literati famously described it, was “a miniature capitalist state”¹²⁴ and, according to another one, represented “a veritable continuation of what Bałuty had been for years, a continuation that brought Bałuty to its absolute limits. For years Potato the King, the King of Penury, has ruled over Franciszkańska, Młynarska, and Józefa steets.”¹²⁵ Not surprisingly, then, the Polish Communists welcome the end to the “criminal” Bałuty,

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 255.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 252.

¹²¹ Nikołaj Timkowski-Kostin in Frejdllich, *Uśmiech Ariadny: Antologia Reportażu łódzkiego*, 62.

¹²² Marek Sygulski, *Rzeźnia Bałucka 1910-1935* (Łódź: Ameba, 2001), 134-135.

¹²³ Andrzej Makowiecki “Bałucki rynek” [The Bałuty Market] *Odgłosy* 32 (1966): 1, 5.

¹²⁴ Adolf Rudnicki, *Kupiec Łódzki ; Niebieskie Kartki* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1963), see also: Bolesław Dudziński, “Pamiętnik z łódzkiego getta” [Memoir from the Litzmannstadt Ghetto] *Odgłosy* 27 (1960): 7, 8.

¹²⁵ Zbigniew Kwiatkowski, *Gdzie padają kule*, 48.

brought by the Nazi occupation, with a sense of relief. Max Bornstein, the notorious “Blind Max,” who was the godfather of Bałuty’s criminal world, and whose “sentences were carried out more meticulously than the decision of the state administration,”¹²⁶ was now living a quiet life in a inner-city tenement, and even gave an interview to *Odgłosy*. Although he still seemed to be training pickpockets (he had at home a special mannequin for that purposes), he was on amicable terms with the new authorities (allegedly because he paid the Polish Socialist Party a large sum in 1947).¹²⁷

There were, therefore, important ideological and symbolic reasons for the rebuilding of Bałuty. But while post-war Bałuty was still haunted by its Jewish past (those who lived in the area of the former Ghetto said they were visited by ghosts on the Sabbath¹²⁸), soon after the war it was the main area where the peasant migrants moved into. Because of its low housing standards, Bałuty was typically the very first stop of the rural migrants – in 1962 only 7 per cent of its population was native to Łódź.¹²⁹ Therefore rebuilding Bałuty was seen as a project of eradicating the “peasant mindset” and “peasant habits” of the Polish population. The journalist Andrzej Brycht, for example, argued that Bałuty was plagued by its anti-social character, and was the embodiment of the typically peasant “small-scale individualism” that propelled the new urbanites to be disinterested in communal, joint activities, and guided only by narrowly-conceived self-interest.¹³⁰ Yet, ironically, the very same journalist admonished the workers in Widzew, an industrial and residential district located east of the inner-city, for precisely the opposite – for their of “chauvinistic peasant (*wsiowy*) mindset,” that made the Widzew closely-knit community also anti-social, but in the sense that it was hostile to outsiders (read: Communists).¹³¹ In this case, the “ruralization” argument focused not on the alleged “individualism” but on the putative “communitarism” of the Polish urbanites with a peasant background. In both cases it essentially boiled down to being disloyal to the new authorities.

No two districts in Łódź could have been so different as Bałuty and Widzew. If Bałuty was a site that rural migrants came to in order to find their entry point into the city and its industry, Widzew was a village with a traditional strong community that was gradually being absorbed by Łódź and its industry. In short, in Bałuty people came to the city. In Widzew, the city came to the people. Still in the late nineteenth century Widzew was a manorial village on Łódź’s outskirts. Small-holding was widespread.

¹²⁶ Henryk Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów: Łódź W Latach 1861-1918* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1978), 411.

¹²⁷ Karol Badziak “Z wizytą u Ślepego Maksa” [Visiting the Blind Max] *Odgłosy* 45 (1959): 3, see also: Karol Badziak, *Alfabet Łódzki* (Łódź: Karol Badziak, 1992).

¹²⁸ Jan Kołodziej, “Ulica Wolborska nr 40” [The Wolborska st. nr 40] *Odgłosy* 11 (1959): 1, 7.

¹²⁹ Wacław Piotrowski, *Spoleczno-Przestrzenna Struktura Miasta Łodzi: Studium Ekologiczne* (Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo PAN, 1966), 126.

¹³⁰ Andrzej Brycht, “Zniszczyli mi Bałuty” [They destroyed my Bałuty] *Odgłosy* 6 (1961): 1, 5.

¹³¹ Andrzej Brycht, “O rąbaniu domów i plotkarskiej klicie” [On damaging houses and a gossiping clique] *Odgłosy* 40 (1959): 10.

Widzew's main textile factory, the Wima, was founded in 1879, as the future magnate Juliusz Kunitzer realized that Widzew's peasantry did not enjoy job opportunities similar to peasants living on the northern, southern and western fringes of the city. He realized, in other words, that he could enjoy a monopoly over the labor market in Widzew, and hence drive wages down. By 1900 Kunitzer's Wima and a thread factory employed over 3,500 people living in the adjacent villages, who now moved to Widzew. He also exercised factory paternalism, but the housing he built differed radically from the red-brick tenements erected by other textile magnates in the inner-city. The 150 so-called "Kunitzer houses" were wooden single-storey houses with virtually no amenities. Water in Widzew, for example, was drawn from wells.¹³² Still during the interwar period Widzew was separated from Łódź proper by a forest; this forest was soon largely cut down, but the park that remained in its lieu, still constituted a spatial buffer zone that contributed to Widzew's isolation and integrity.

Because the working-class of Widzew was nearly exclusively Polish, after the war Widzew became cherished as the bellweather of the Łódź proletariat and the main resource used for the symbolic polonization of Łódź and its history. Polish accounts of the 1905 revolution, for example, typically stressed that the first barricades were put up in Widzew. The "red Widzew" gained the reputation of being the "forge of Łódź revolution" (*kuźnia łódzkiego rewolucjonizmu*), and the "school of proletarian wisdom" (*szkoła robotniczej mądrości*), as Andrzej Brycht described in his feature article.¹³³ The Jewish and Bałuty involvement in the revolution became quickly blotted out. The real trouble the authorities had with Widzew, however, becomes clear in the afterlife of Brycht's rosy piece. Two weeks later, Brycht published a new article where he apologized Mr. Mirosław Buda, whom he had accused of having demolished one of the wooden houses with an axe. Buda, Brycht wrote in the original article, got angry in a drunken haze that he did not receive an flat in one of the new apartment blocks. It turned out, however, that the Widzew informants tricked Brycht, seeking to discredit Buda who was non-native to Widzew. Buda was, it turned out later, also a Party member, and a skilled worker, who "did not allow his wife to visit her female neighbors and gossip (*chodzić po kominkach*), did not let them in into his house." But more importantly, Brycht reported, "wife of a certain Juśkiewicz [the man who had backbitten Buda] pestered Buda's wife, asking her to buy some stockings, or thermometers of unknown origin. Buda chased her away, explained to his wife that if she wanted to buy something, then she should buy it in a store. There was no need to support illicit peddling (*pokątny handel*)." This is how, according to Brycht, the "hatred for the Widzew misfit" (*odmieniec*) had started. Brycht concluded, that "in spite of being part

¹³² Bolesław Pełka, "Przekształcenie wsi Widzew w kapitalistyczną dzielnicę miasta" [How the village of Widzew became district in a capitalist city], in *Studia i materiały do dziejów Łodzi i okręgu łódzkiego, I. II*, ed. Helena Brodowska, 308, 311-328 (Łódź, Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1966).

¹³³ Andrzej Brycht, "Widzew po fajerancie" [Widzew after hours] *Odgłosy* 38 (1959): 1, 8.

of a city for nearly twenty years, certain sections of the Widzew community had not managed to get rid of the chauvinistic peasant (*wsiowy*) mindset.”¹³⁴

Padraic Kenney in his *Rebuilding Poland* claimed that soon after the war, Łódź represented “Poland of the past,” whereas the old Breslau and the new Wrocław, where the migrant population was dominant, represented the “Poland of the future.” The very same can be said of Widzew and Bałuty respectively. Because of its strongly-knit working-class (and not peasant) community, Widzew would systematically “fall off the housing plan” despite the fact that its proletariat was glorified in the mass media as the “most class conscious and the most mature.”¹³⁵ Well into the 1960s, the Kunitzer houses and its inhabitants were left unscathed, and increasingly served as the “living monument” of the bygone Poland’s Manchester. Turning Łódź into a Polish metropolis, however, was initiated from Bałuty. Still in 1959, when a large bulk of Łódź’s population was connected to the communal pipeline, in Widzew most water was obtained from two hundred and fifty old-fashioned wells, or simply bought for 0,03 złoty per bucket.¹³⁶ This is why it seemed natural that Widzew was next, after people dwelling in basements and attics or demolished houses (*rozbiórkowi*), to move to apartments blocks. As Widzew “fell of the housing plan yet again,” its workers were offered to move to apartments in Bałuty. They balked. When they found out that they would be evicted anyway, they mustered all allegiance possible (including appealing to a member of the Party Central Committee, native to Widzew¹³⁷) in order to have the decision revoked. Then they were promised to be moved to new housing projects in Widzew. This was only partially fulfilled: only the very first apartment block built in Widzew comprised exclusively of population native to the district. In all ensuing apartment blocks were populated by people coming from various parts of Łódź. Workers argued that this was a “deliberate policy” foisted upon them in order to “parcel us out” and spread around the city (*rozparcelować nas po mieście*). Authorities’ argument was that “if the working class wants to have practitioners, engineers and schoolteachers in Widzew, they have to give them apartments too.”¹³⁸ This mixing was the very basis for making a Polish city and what I will describe in Chapter Six as the rescaling of identity.

The people without history

“In a city that belongs to no one,” noted once Richard Sennett, “people are constantly seeking to leave a trace of themselves, a record of their story. In the 1970s New York was awash with these traces. Huge numbers, initials, and nicknames appeared inside and outside subway cars, insignia made with cans of pressurized spray paint and felt-

¹³⁴ Andrzej Brycht, “O rąbaniu domów i plotkarskiej klice.”

¹³⁵ Andrzej Brycht, “Widzew po fajerancie,” Andrzej Makowiecki, “Portret dzielnicy czerwonej” [Portrait of the red district] *Odgłosy* 24 (1974): 1, 4.

¹³⁶ Andrzej Jarosławski, “Woda (to nie dotyczy treści)” [The water issue] *Odgłosy* 36 (1959): 1, 5.

¹³⁷ Michalina Tatarówna-Majkowska, a Communist activist, and leader of the Party in the Łódź region.

¹³⁸ Andrzej Berkowicz, “Pożegnanie ze slumsami” [Farewell to the slums] *Odgłosy* 20 (1965): 1, 3.

tipped pens.”¹³⁹ Hooliganism, or *chamstwo*, that is “mindless violence,” also inflicted upon material objects (then referred to as vandalism) was directly linked to dispossession from one’s right to the city. That dispossession was achieved mainly by suburbanization and haussmannization of Łódź – that I will start describing in Chapter Six. From a cluster of “factory towns” and urban “petty kingdoms,” after the 1950s Łódź started becoming a “compact” urban organism, while factory paternalism (expressed by the attempts to keep the place of work and residence as close to one another as possible) was moved down a rung or even two lower the urban hierarchy. The ruralization argument, or the argument of the “peasant hunchback” of the new post-war urbanites was actually used for dispossessing both old and new urbanites, as the Widzew and Bałuty comparison demonstrated. But the new material structures that followed in the wake of human agency did not eradicate “hooliganism,” “vandalism” or unruly youth from the city life; on the contrary, very quickly *chamstwo* returned in the form of “mindless” crimes (as contrasted to the “artisan” criminals of the pre-1939 era, such as Blind Max), and continued devastation of the urban infrastructure. The “opaque” claims onto the urban space, and the reemergence of *chamstwo*, vandalism and hooliganism, became increasingly conspicuous throughout the 1970s and especially the 1980s. But the roots of the dispossession lay in the first post-war decade and its aftermath.

The unruly youth, frowned upon for their putative serf habits and mindsets, spontaneously living their new urban lives in the best way they knew, were the agency behind the development of the new economic structure. Łódź used to be called a “smokestack city,” (*kominogród*) and Poland’s Manchester. After 1956 it gradually metamorphosed into a new urban organism. In 1945 its built environment (both residential and industrial) was obsolete by world standards, and a change was perhaps inevitable. But no change unfolds in vacuum. At least a significant part of the direction for Łódź’s development was in the hands of the “spoiled” and “hooligan” youth. Of course Łódź was not the only city in Poland that experienced a massive migration soon after the war. Warsaw too (as well as Los Angeles and many other cities) was described as a “giant village” (*wielka wiocha*).¹⁴⁰ Stalinism brought, as Błażej Brzostek wrote with regard to Warsaw, a veritable “renaissance of the street” – and after 1956 social life turned inwards, towards “private” spaces.¹⁴¹ This transition is in large part to blame for the “structural forgetting” of the spontaneous post-war urban life. But there were also other mechanisms at work.

One of Poland’s leading independent intellectuals, Bronisław Łagowski, has recently pointed out that the vast swathes of Poland’s “common people” (*lud*) have never been

¹³⁹ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life Of cities*, 1st ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 205.

¹⁴⁰ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 150; Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 33.

¹⁴¹ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 128.

subjects of history. The French people, he stressed, overthrew the Bastille, and *they have collectively remained aware of that*. As I have shown, the Stalinist cities have been in large part shaped by young indigent peasant youth. But it is true that they, as well as their progeny, have remained ashamed of their own history. The 1905 revolution was abortive. The condescending words of Łódź's very first post-1989 mayor are more than telling. Poland's "people without history," the *chamstwo*, "gained their national consciousness" Łagowski argued, "by assimilating the gentry-cum-intelligentsia's mythology. They became the object of symbolic violence – or rather symbolic domination, as nobody was doing this deliberately."¹⁴² That ideology is, of course, the Jagiellon concept. I will describe in more detail the symbolic violence, and reemergence of the Jagiellon ideology, in Chapters Six and Seven. It is perhaps wholly tragic that the moment when the *chamstwo* did become subjects of history was relegated to the darkest chapters of national (and world) history. But as I showed in this and the previous chapters, Communist's power was never absolute, and there were very important limits to what historians still today describe as "ever-expanding control by the authorities over the lives of society, social groups and private individuals."¹⁴³ Polish Stalinism, let alone the years that followed it, was not as Orwellian as it is usually painted.¹⁴⁴

This is, of course, not to glorify Stalinism. It was a continuation of the revolutionary war, and it was a violent period. If measured in quantitative terms, Stalinism was not the most prosperous period in the Polish history. Ever since, as the Communist authorities eagerly emphasized, there were more apartments, more refrigerators, and more television sets. More people had access to running water, central heating but also education and cultural amenities. Yet, as I will discuss presently, this improvement was actually experienced as disempowerment. This is how Zygmunt Józwiak, born in 1907 in Łódź and interviewed in 1984, recalled his pre- and post-war life: "maybe that's the way old people think, but although living standards were far worse back then, I think we used to be happier. There was a lot of joy, youth groups went on outings, sang songs and played musical instruments. There is nothing like that today. Today there is only the gramophone, or the tape player. Life is different nowadays."¹⁴⁵ It could not have been put better. How music and spatial transformation were interwoven, and how the transition in question was also a powerful cultural change I will discuss in the coming chapter.

¹⁴² Bronisław Łagowski "Niemy lud polski" [The silent common people in Poland, interview by Adam Leszczyński] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (3 November 2007): 14. See also Stanisław Stomma, "Lud bez historii" [People without history] *Polityka* 48 (2007): 130.

¹⁴³ A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland Under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 39.

¹⁴⁴ For such an account of state socialism and especially the long 1960s see: Maciej Drygas, *One day in People's Poland* (Jeden dzień w PRL, Poland, France, 2005).

¹⁴⁵ Danuta Halladin, *Łódzki życiorys* [A life in Łódź] (Warsaw: Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych, 1984).



Photograph Eight – The Old Town Square

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THE RESCALING OF IDENTITY

Arguing against the essentializing and ahistorical notions of urban identity, and the easy reduction of urban consciousness to the reflection of class relations and economic processes, Kian Tajbakhsh offered a reinterpretation of Manuel Castells' work on "the elusive problem of identities in modern urban societies."¹ He rejected Castells' rendering of the urban processes (and agency) as relatively autonomous, and sought to "reintegrate class and space," by developing a theory of urban identity that would not be overdetermined by the place of work, but that would include all other spaces and places that are constitutive for the urban hybrid and contradictory identity. Tajbakhsh criticized Harvey's notion of "the urbanization of consciousness" as functionalist and reducing identity to the issue of reproduction of capital, and suggested perceiving identity "as relational, defined *vis-à-vis* other identities in a field in which the mutual determination of identities is not arrested at a point of final determination." Further, he argued in favor of "rejection of an a priori relation of determination between the objective social position of agents (e.g., their places in the class structure) and the identities that may arise within a particular place." For that he invoked Castells' views on the disjuncture between the "system of the production of space" and the "system of the production of values" that "makes the one-to-one expression or mapping of a group's values (e.g. proletarian, artisanal) onto an area (e.g. working-class or artisan neighborhood) not necessarily impossible, but inherently contingent."²

¹ Tajbakhsh, *The Promise of the City*, 35.

² *Ibid.*, 51.

In the light of the historically-aware definition of class adopted in this study, the “functionalist bias” is not a real problem here. But the issue highlighted by Tajbakhsh has another dimension too. The fundamental disjuncture between the realm of ideas and the realm of social and economic structures underpins much of the spatial theory developed by Richard Sennett.³ His *Fall of the Public Man* is informed by the attempt to explain the incongruence of the actual lived urban experience and its most commonplace representations. In this it revisits a number of themes from his earlier works: *The Uses of Disorder* and *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. Thus, Sennett’s most acclaimed work is actually very contemporary, as its problematic grows out directly from the discontents with the “urban crisis” of the long 1960s (in the West). In *The Uses of Disorder* Sennett sought to understand the roots of the congruence of “class” and “community” and how this produced “myths of a purified community” that were “cemented by an act of will rather than by acts of experience.”⁴ When an “outsider” moved in to a “purified community,” say a black into a white neighborhood, the purified community would seek its cohesion by expulsion, although their solidarity is based not upon their lived experience but around an abstractly understood “identity.”

Because it is washed off of the real urban experience, that is serendipitous and unexpected, the modern urban identity is, according to Sennett, “purified.”⁵ In the *Hidden Injuries of Class* Sennett, together with Jonathan Cobb, scrutinized how the American “urban villagers,” children of migrants, who have been living in ethnic communities, now faced a profound Americanization of both the urban and cultural landscapes. While in the urban “Little Italys” or “Little Polands” that were living a life in which their experience of ethnicity was tangible and everyday, through the massive urban renewal projects of the 1950s and 1960s, and veritable “sanitizing of ethnicity,” the Little Italys and the like melted into the single American urban identity and consciousness.⁶ The sense of grief that accompanied this dislocation, loss of personal dignity and integrity, and the feeling of inadequacy in the new urban milieu constituted that they called the “hidden injuries of class.”⁷

It seems not accidental that Sennett’s theorizing appeared during one of the most intensive phases of the “hausmanization” of the United States – an important stage in forging the American “century of geography.” People interviewed in *The Hidden Injuries of Class* were mainly those who were accustomed to the closely-knit American ethnic communities of yore, and who in the 1960s lived in the increasingly dilapidated

³ Except for the works discussed here, this issue is also fundamental to Sennett’s later works, see: Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*.

⁴ Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity & City Life* (New York: Norton, 1970), 33.

⁵ Tajbakhsh, *The Promise of the City*, 169-170. See also a recent reappraisal: Robert J. Sampson, “Analytic approaches to disorder,” *British Journal of Sociology* 60, no. 1 (March 2009): 83-93, and: Richard Sennett, “Urban disorder today,” *British Journal of Sociology* 60, no. 1 (2009): 57-58.

⁶ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 306.

⁷ Richard Sennett, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, Vintage Books V-940 (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 14-15.

inner-cities – the main target for “planners who dream of rivers of concrete connecting the office with the suburban bedroom.” Displacement caused by urban renewals, and the widening separation between the place of work and the place of residence, “often leave the uprooted with a sense of ‘grieving’ akin to what they felt when a member of the family has died;” their psychological injury was attenuated by the fact that “they are powerless in the hands of the economic and political forces controlling the cities,” seeking to integrate the “urban villagers into the “American life.” The net result of the renewal projects, and the profound suburbanization of America, was the combination of the “urban” and “professional” revolutions. The blue-collar workers of the old “urban villages” were replaced by the white-collar “salaried masses.” In that new urban America “human capabilities are measured in terms profoundly alien to those prevalent in the ethnic enclaves of their childhood.”⁸ The refashioned identity, in other words, was not as much place-bound, did not grow out of the lived experience of a community, but was much more fragmented; the post-war haussmanization, as Sennett noted, brought the purification of identity to its logical end, and constituted the main reason behind the “social death of the city.”⁹

What is missing in that discussion, however, is the issue of scale. In this chapter, I seek to speak of the new urban identity in scalar terms, as well as to look at the role of the dialectic between space and place (and class) in the process of identity formation. Further, I will show that precisely the same processes were taking place behind the Iron Curtain, although, of course, the United States were in leading in haussmanization of cities. In Chapter Five I showed that the post-war spatial policy focused on the renewal of Bałuty precisely because it was the largest interstice in the Łódź working-class community, where the place of work and the place of residence had been most radically divorced as a result of the Nazi annihilation of Łódź’s Jewry and the pattern of the post-war migration. As I already partially discussed in Chapter Four, the wartime attempt to remake Łódź into a “Nazi metropolis” was the very first step in the “uprooting” of the Łódź “urban villagers,” and triggered an unprecedented internal movement of people within the city. This is why, the post-war sense of dispossession and uprootedness, the Polish injury of class, has been narrated through World War Two stories –this is when the movement started, and this is when, emotionally, the most dramatic damage was made. It was further accelerated by the post-war developments, and the juvenile “hooliganism” (youth seemingly “loitering” aimlessly or hanging out in the city) was one of its most spectacular manifestation.

I suggest describing the “purification of identity” in scalar terms, because only with a full haussmannization of cities can we speak of the urban as a distinct and coherent scale. It was through the breaking down of the urban ethnic enclaves, and making

⁸ Ibid., 16-18. See also: Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany* (London: Verso, 1998).

⁹ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 297-301.

people travel between distant places in the city on a daily basis, that the modern “metropolises” emerged. Instead of the “purification of identity” or the “urbanization of consciousness”¹⁰ I will speak of “rescaling of identity” precisely in order to emphasize the process of eradication of human attachment to a local urban community and promotion of the identification with the city as a whole – and with a number of other communities in which one participates in a more imaginary and imputed than quotidian sense. The politics of identity is inherently scalar: nationalism, regionalism, militant particularism, community-based politics of purification and so forth all allude to a certain scale at which these ideologies operate. It is indeed, as Neil Smith pointed out, “difficult to comprehend the real meaning of ‘dispersal’, ‘decentralization’, ‘spatial restructuring’ and so forth, without a clear understanding of geographical scale.”¹¹ Scales are inherently dynamic, and by rescaling I simply mean the change from one scale to another. “However fixed scales are made,” noted Smith, “they are subject to change, and it is through the continual determination and internal differentiation of spatial scale that the uneven development of capitalism is organized. The vital point here is not simply to take these spatial scales as given, no matter how self-evident they appear, but to understand the origins, determination and inner coherence and differentiation of each scale as already contained in the structure of capital.”¹² Rescaling, uneven development, identity and class are therefore fundamentally related.

Farwell to smokestacks

Music- and place-making

After the exodus of the intellectuals from Łódź to the rebuilt Warsaw was nearly competed by the early 1950s, virtually the only cultural institution of national importance that remained in Łódź was the Film School. Unlike the literati, who found it difficult to “muster sympathy for Łódź” and largely ignored the existence of the Łódź working class, and unlike the filmmakers of the “Polish Film School,” whose feature films from the late 1950s were inherently neo-Romantic in their criticism of the despised socialist realism and were programmatically disinterested in the rank-and-file,¹³ the new generation of filmmakers, who studied and lived in Łódź after 1956, increasingly often portrayed workers in their documentaries. Perhaps the most arresting of such works is the documentary *From the City of Łódź* (1969) made by Krzysztof Kieślowski. It is also very different from the schematic depiction of workers, typical of the socialist realist aesthetic and, instead, fundamentally elegiac in tone.¹⁴ Just as urban

¹⁰ David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Oxford, [England]: B. Blackwell, 1989), chap. 8.

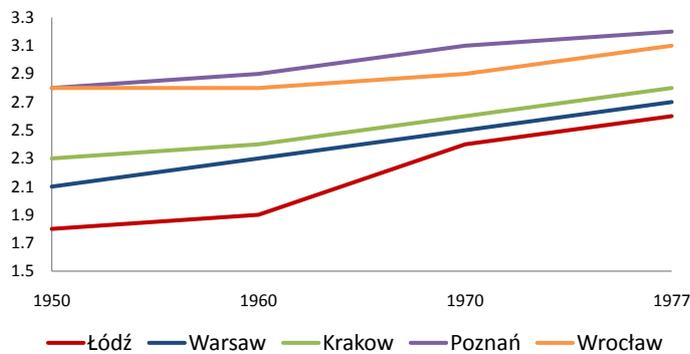
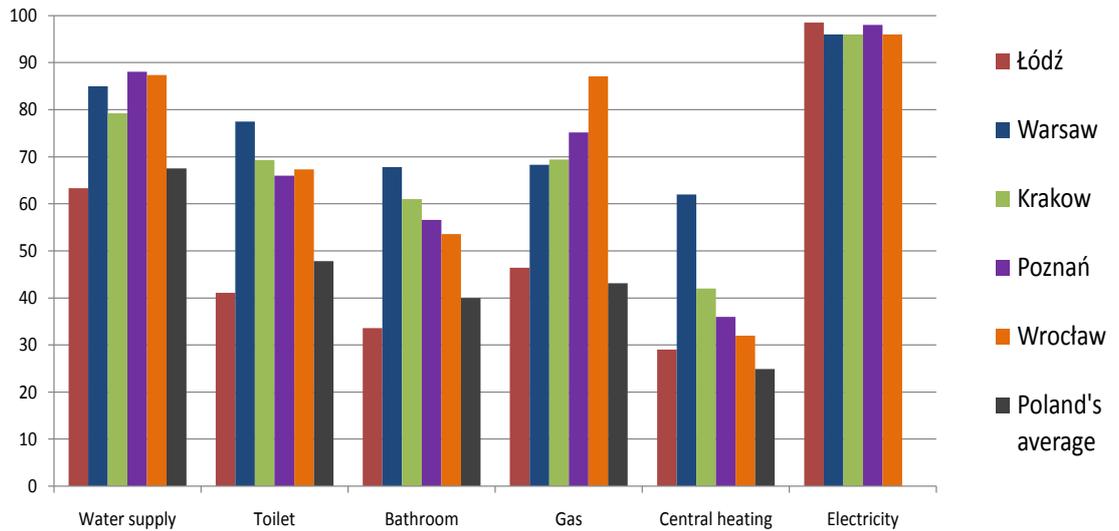
¹¹ Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1991), 134.

¹² *Ibid.*, 136.

¹³ The major figures in the “Polish Film School” are Andrzej Wajda, Tadeusz Konwicki, Kazimierz Kutz, Andrzej Munk, Jerzy Kawalerowicz and Wojciech Jerzy Has.

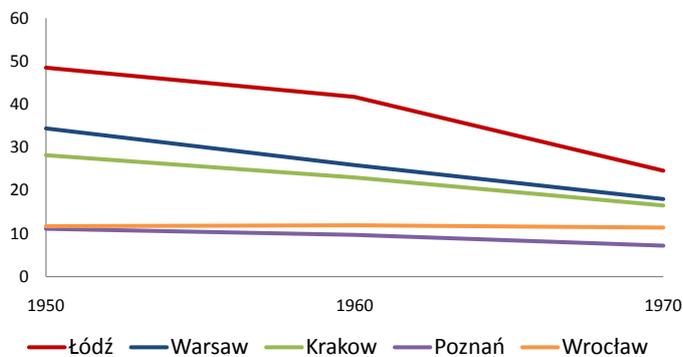
¹⁴ Marek Haltof, *The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski: Variations on Destiny and Chance* (London: Wallflower, 2004), 9-10.

10.1 Percentage of apartments equipped with basic amenities in 1966



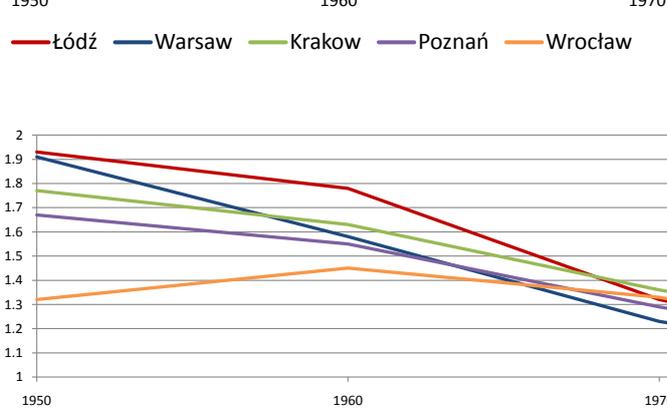
10.2

Average number of rooms in apartments



10.3

Percentage of single-room apartments in the city's housing stock



10.4

Average number of people per room

Plate ten

Amenities and housing in Polish cities

Source: *Łódź w 35-ciu PRLu*, p. 51, 104, Ginsbert, *Łódź*, 231

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ethnographers, who set out in the 1960s to document the vanishing *Lebenswelt* of the Łódź “urban villagers,” noted the gradual “disappearance of distinct working-class traditions” from the cityscape,¹⁵ Kieślowski’s documentary records a world that was passing away, and shows the portents of the new city. Except for a touching retirement ceremony, vignettes of the inner-city street life, as well as work routine in the old cotton mills, Kieślowski recorded the emotions stirred up by an attempt to close down the Mandolinists’ Orchestra of the Polish Radio conducted by Edward Ciuksza – Łódź workers’ absolute favorite music.

For years Ciuksza’s Orchestra entertained Łódź’s workers, and performed both on the radio and in nearly all of Łódź’s factories. A female worker confessed: “when Ciuksza is on, I can get nothing done at home. This music gives us life.” Now, again, the administration in Warsaw wanted to disband the orchestra, arguing that it was the Radio Orchestra of the “lowest artistic level” and should not be sustained from the state budget. Workers filed a written protest. Atmosphere in factories recorded by Kieślowski was joviality blended with outrage: “they should sack this [big-beat] *Zespół Nowych* from Warsaw, they sound like cats on heat,” said one lady; or “these teddy-boys in stupid hats should get the boot” another one added, and the group laughed. Some were in a more somber mood: “[they air] only loud trumpets and horseplay, whereas Ciuksza’s music, when they put it on, because they hardly do, makes our life easier and more endurable.” And some sounded a more radical note: “if they want to take this away from us, then they might as well take away our lives, because by sacking Ciuksza they put closure to our old wretched lives.” Some appealed to official arguments too: “above all, Poland is a workers’ country, and they should keep this workers’ music. Because all that is best is taken away to Warsaw or Katowice, and Łódź is always left behind.”¹⁶

The mandolinists’ orchestra was spared yet again, although its airing time had been already limited, and it was prohibited to perform more “ambitious repertoire” such as Gireg, Sibelius or Tchaikovsky. Edward Ciuksza died in February 1970. “Flowers on his grave had not yet wilted,” *Odgłosy* wrote, and the ensemble was sacked.¹⁷ The crowning argument against Ciuksza had been that its repertoire was “too weak for the modern tastes” and that its “folkish tunes” promoted the low-brow peasant tastes – that had to be cast off in a rapidly urbanizing country.¹⁸ True, Ciuksza’s ensemble moved to Łódź from Vilnius in spring 1945, together with the rural migrants. Yet, it was a continuation of Łódź long *proletarian* traditions and not yet another example of the “ruralization of the city.” As I argued in Chapter Five, the ruralization argument was not descriptive but political – and was used for the extirpation of the inner-city

¹⁵ Bronisława Kopczyńska-Jaworska, *Łódź i Inne Miasta*, 53.

¹⁶ Krzysztof Kieślowski, *Z miasta Łodzi* [From the city of Łódź] (Warszawa: Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych, 1969).

¹⁷ K[arol] B[adziak], “Podzwonne dla mandoliny” [A mandolin death knell] *Odgłosy* 20 (1970): 4.

¹⁸ Krystyna Wojtasik, “Mówi Łódź” [Łódź speaking] *Odgłosy* 28 (1961): 2.

working-class community. One may call the Łódź proletariat urban villagers not because they were peasants – but because their identity was strongly-place bound and shaped by the textile industry and the paternalism corollary to it.

Łódź was, as I argued in Chapter Three, a strange “mélange,” and a melting pot of very many social groups, and initially, because of its extraordinary sprawl, “every new settler group could find their own place and live there the life they were accustomed to.”¹⁹ By 1900, however, after two decades of inward-directed expansion, the “factory enclaves” and “petty kingdoms” gradually covered the previous “blank spots,” and Łódź’s “characteristic elements of beauty and whole tracts of ugliness” were shaped; former peasants started evolving into urban proletariat, or rather segmented working-classes (in the sense developed in Chapter One), each living a separate life in a small world evolving around their factory, and adjacent housing, shops, the Church—all within a walking distance.²⁰ When urban folklorists set out to document Łódź’s perishing proletarian culture, they had quickly realized that music was its most valuable element.²¹ The material culture of the Łódź workers was unsophisticated and banal; it attested to little more than the fact that Łódź’s workers had peasant roots.²² Łódź proletarian culture was, just as the youth urban street culture of the Stalinist period (see Chapter Five), non-material and rather ephemeral and hence difficult to pin down. Or, rather, its “material base” is to be sought elsewhere. Workers’ music was inexorably tied to their neighborhood community, and its ways of sociability. Zygmunt Józkwiać quoted at the end of the previous chapter, native to Widzew, and a mandolin player, recalled: “There used to be this neighbors’ hospitality (*gościnność sąsiedzka*) among us. We visited each other, invited one another for special celebrations (*święta czy uroczystości*), or gathered to make music.”²³ Ciuksza’s popularity was therefore anchored in the thriving working class musical culture, partially brought there from the countryside, and partially inherited from the glee orchestras of the Saxon weavers.²⁴ Ciuksza’s immense popularity (its records were selling better than many big beat bands) inspired the foundation of many mandolin ensembles in Łódź and Silesia, mandolin being “relatively inexpensive and relatively easy to master” an instrument.²⁵

¹⁹ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 12-13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 246.

²¹ Bronisława Kopczyńska Jaworska et al., *Folklor robotniczej Łodzi: pokłosie konkursu* [Folklore of the proletarian Łódź] (Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1976), 137-138. See Eugeniusz Ajnenkiel, *Czerwona lutnia: pieśni robotnicze* [Worker's songbook] (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1964), Eugeniusz Ajnenkiel, *Piosenki i wiersze robotniczej Łodzi w latach 1882-1939* [Songs and poems of the working-class Łódź, 1882-1939] (Łódź: Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1958). Edward Rosset, ed., *Łódź W Latach 1945-1960* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1963), 351-359.

²² Kopczyńska Jaworska, *Folklor robotniczej Łodzi*, 20-26.

²³ Danuta Halladin, *Łódzki życiorys*.

²⁴ Bronisława Kopczyńska-Jaworska, *Łódź I Inne Miasta [Łódź and Other Cities]* (Łódź: Katedra Etnologii Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1999), chap. 6.

²⁵ K[arol] B[adziak], “Podzwonne dla mandoliny.”

Further, music skills could be turned into a source of income in the times of crisis. Just as American jazz, as Eric Hobsbawm compellingly described, was “entirely rooted in the lives of poor people,”²⁶ the landscape of inter-war Łódź, when factory jobs were scarce, was in large part shaped by the so-called “courtyard bands” (*kapela podwórkowa*).²⁷ The phenomenon of urban “soundscapes,” for example, has only recently been noted.²⁸ If jazz, as many cultural historians noted, reflected the accelerating pace of life, as the name of ragtime was derived “from irregular movement of syncopated rhythms and its effect on traditional time – literally time in tatters,”²⁹ as the fans of Ciuksza noted, the music of Łódź’s workers was “soothing” their senses – provided a form of refuge from the exploitative and hostile working environment. But it also “gave them life” by offering a possibility of constructing an milieu alternative to that of the workplace and its fast pace and time discipline. If music-making, as William McNeill demonstrated, is a powerful mechanism of marshalling social cohesion amongst troops, likewise it could “glue” a place-bound working-class community.³⁰ As Gilles Deleuze pointed out, music is thoroughly political – not because it can convey a political message, but because it is spatial. Performing live music is an act of staking out a territory, symbolic yet enormously powerful process of “placemaking.”³¹ In a city with such a high single-room occupancy and with a weak institution of the family, proletarian culture and social life were largely practiced outdoors – unfolding in the street or in the tenement courtyard. Music was an integral part of that social world. Most accounts of working-class culture overlook this crucial spatial-cum-musical aspect of class formation, let alone its link this with a spatial change.³²

Combating ‘factory chauvinism’

Sacking of the mandolin orchestra was, Kieślowski’s interviewees were on the mark, a closure of an entire world. The nature of this transition was well captured in the very last sequence of his documentary—a long centrifugal camera movement, where the viewers are led outside of the inner-city to the ring of new housing projects erected in

²⁶ E. J Hobsbawm, *Uncommon People: Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998), viii.

²⁷ Michał Koliński, *Łódź między wojnami. Opowieść o życiu miasta 1918-1939* (Łódź: Piątek Trzynastego, 2007).

²⁸ Martijn Oosterbaan, “Sonic Supremacy: Sound, Space and Charisma in a Favela in Rio de Janeiro,” *Critique of Anthropology* 29, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 81-104, Manon Raimbault and Danièle Dubois, “Urban soundscapes: experiences and knowledge,” *Cities* 22, no. 5 (October 2005): 339-350.

²⁹ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), 123.

³⁰ William Hardy McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995).

³¹ See Ronald Bogue, “Gilles Deleuze: the Aesthetics of Force” in Deleuze: a Critical Reader, Paul Patton (ed.), (Oxford: Blackwell), 265-6. For an analysis of spatiality in Kieślowski’s films, see Magdalena Saja, “Gry Przestrzenne” *Kwartalnik Filmowy*, 28 (1999): 180-188.

³² see for example: Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Łódź's new suburbs. The contrast between the two universes is sharp: the former is shanty, dirty and gray, the latter is new, tall and its walls gleam with reflected light. The Łódź of the yore, known as the “smokestack city” (*kominogród*) was gradually withering away. Its skyline used to be dotted by the many smokestacks that all together merged into the “ominous jaws,” as poets often put it, of the industrial city.³³ Its industry was omnipresent as was the soot, invading every corner of the city, and also the apartments, when one opened the window.

Yet, Łódź hardly constituted a coherent urban mechanism. Rather, it functioned as a cluster of independent “urban archipelagos,”³⁴ as a journalist put it, comprising of numerous neighborhood-bounded units. Most typically, the factory owner built his house on the part of the plot adjacent to the street; inside, there was the factory, and dwelling places for his employees. The factory, running on steam power and later on its own powerhouses, had everything it needed. The emerging working class culture in the female-dominated city typically blended the various places: the work, the home and the Church.³⁵ Each of Łódź's smokestacks pointed to such largely self-contained little world. Workers living on the various “islands” differed even culturally from each other. Migratory pathways of peasants from one village tended to be similar – when peasants arrived to Łódź, they usually settled next to the people they already knew. Hence the different dialects that were spoken in Łódź's various corners reflected the migration trajectories.³⁶ It was not uncommon for somebody native to Łódź's northern district to have never visited Łódź's southern quarters, and vice versa. This world of neighboring “factory towns,” maintained by paternalistic policies of their owners, as we saw already, came to an end in 1939. Although during the very first post-war decade the working-class sought to retain the paternalistic practices (by assuming the factory director to be all-powerful, or by demanding that enterprises build housing for their workers), as I will describe in greater detail in Part Three, the new post-war order was fundamentally supra-local where the “urban consciousness” was largely imputed from above, or, as Sennett put it, purified by external forces controlled by larger spatial regimes.

All this was, of course, not restricted to Łódź. Already in the 1920s and the 1930s, there was a important movement against “factory chauvinism” in the Soviet Union. It was, essentially, an attempt to keep in pace with the urban and professional revolutions, and to turn “urban villagers” into full-fledged urbanites. “Factory chauvinism,” its most ardent enemy Alexei Gastev (1882-1939) argued, was sustained by “people from a world with a limited field of vision, few contacts (mostly emotional and face to face), direct communication (speech), and concrete semantic expressiveness” who “found it

³³ e.g. Halina Ożogowska or Jan Sztaudynger in: Skibiński and Stelmaszczyk-Świontek, *Kwiaty Łódzkie*, 143, 166-168.

³⁴ Konrad Frejdlich, “Archipelag nie nazwany” [The unnamed archipelago] *Odgłosy* 49 (1959): 1, 6.

³⁵ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 121-122, 124.

³⁶ Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 490.

difficult to adjust to the abstractions, mechanisms, and schedules of the modern city.”³⁷ Gastev, “the Soviet Taylor,” served as the head of the Moscow’s experimental laboratory of human robotry known as the Central Institute of Labor (1920-1938).³⁸ He was originally a skilled metal worker (a lathe-operator), who turned to training workers and became the Soviet “prophet of efficiency.” He pioneered the visions of a wholly urbanized world – “single unbroken mechanized civilization stretching around the globe”, of “machine cities” and a ‘culture of engineerism’, “was wherein life was ran by machines, where workers’ rhythms were geared to machine tempos, and where technicians wore uniforms and punched in like anyone else.”³⁹

Gastev was a theoretician of what Richard Stites described as “mechanization of awareness.” “The contemporary psychic and social urban landscape,” wrote Stites, “is dense with shapes, paths, people, events, processes that are vital to survival. A knowledge of this topography is as important as is a map to a traveler.” Hence, “the mechanization of awareness as a means of survival in an urban industrial society is one of the most far-reaching phenomena in the history of human culture.” Gastev sought precisely to sharpen people’s mechanization of awareness by extending the influence of machinery from the workplace to the city as a whole. Those, who were shaped by factory chauvinism, he argued, were inadequately trained in “the ballet of street movement with its headlong rushes, unseeing pedestrians, constant collisions, lurches and sudden halts,”⁴⁰ and hence the necessity for a “revolution in time.” It would produce “new humanity, transformed by the clock and the machine ... reorganized in its diet, housing, clothing, transport, leisure, and work into a community of kinetic-minded units, running around on schedule, organizing themselves.”⁴¹

E.P. Thompson, argued Stites, was the very first one to notice the salience of the mechanization of awareness in his classic essays on clocks and industrial production.⁴² “Beginning around 1700, bells, clocks, timesheets, incentives, punishments, supervision, preaching and the suppressing of fairs and sports were the machinery of creating new labor habits.” But at the same time, the city itself demanded a reworking of “social time” and a “frame of temporal reference different from that of the small village” because of the vastness and density of the urban field of interaction.⁴³ In the world of urban villagers that interaction was still limited. Industrial disciplining was mainly achieved through the factory whistle. Reymont’s novel, for example, opens with

³⁷ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 163.

³⁸ Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002), 49. Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 272.

³⁹ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 151-152.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 162-163.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴² See: E. P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past & Present*, no. 38 (December 1967): 56-97.

⁴³ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 162.

the following sentence: “Łódź was awakening. One first shrill blast, rending the silence of the small hours, and followed by the ululations of sirens all over the town, noisier and still more noisy, tearing and ripping the air to tatters with their harsh uncouth din—a chorus of gigantic cocks, as it were, crowing from those metal throats of theirs.”⁴⁴ It were the factory whistles that gave the city its unity and coherence – but it was only unity in time, so to speak, and not in space. When workers from the various “urban archipelagos” actually spilled over the streets of Łódź (mainly on Sundays), as Reymont and many others noted, they hardly knew how “how to behave” and were insufficiently proficient in the urban “ballet of movement.” Workers in their free time, Reymont described, “came flooding on the Piotrkowska street, pouring into it in long lines from cross-roads and by-ways, jostling one another with the ponderous heaves of crowds that passively take and give every impact and every push.” They “walked on with dull, plodding steps, ill at ease in their holiday clothing, confused by the relative stillness of the streets, and by that freedom of the Sunday rest, with which they did not know what to do.”⁴⁵ Mechanization of awareness at their workplace did not automatically turn teach them the “proper” urban gait.

City in motion

In Chapter Three I described Łódź as an industrial island in a vast agricultural ocean. In fact, most cities before the turn of the centuries were largely self-contained and idiosyncratic. This is well visible in the absolute temporal chaos of the late nineteenth century. Not only there was different time in each country – many cities had their specific time. Before, as a result of intensive efforts and fierce power struggles, the world was divided into time zones, and the coordination of train schedules demanded unification of time in each state, “anarcho-clockism” ruled supreme. The unification of time was achieved through electrification: sending electric signals through submarine cables allowed for coordination of distant clocks, as well as measuring distances between remote sites.⁴⁶ Electric measurement of time also allowed for a greater precision, and was achieved through “democratization of time.” An ardent enemy of “anarcho-clochism,” abhorred by the “chaos” into which the world had plunged during the World War One, argued: “we must, in a word, popularize it, we must democratize time” so everybody becomes “master not only of the hour but also of the minute, the second, and even in special cases the tenth, the hundredth, the thousandth, the millionth of a second.” In other words, “distributed, coordinated precision time” translated into “access to orderliness, interior and exterior—to freedom from time anarchy.”⁴⁷ New technological devises, such as the telegraph, allowed to develop a sense of simultaneity.

⁴⁴ Reymont, *The Promised Land*, 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴⁶ Peter Galison, *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Maps: Empires of Time* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 182-183.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 323.

Eiffel Tower became its very symbol – as signals were being sent from it.⁴⁸ Precisely such “unification of distant places” was achieved through the new invention of the cinema. Motion pictures, it was often pointed out, create a sense of being in multiple places at the same time: “events which are far distant from one another so that we could not be physically present at all of them at the same time are fusing in our field of vision, just as they are brought together in our consciousness.”⁴⁹

Except for the general haussmannization of cities during the “era of reconstruction,” achieved through the building of city-wide infrastructure that greatly increased the circulation of people, electric current, water, sewage, heat, commodities and so forth, the major force behind the emergence of the “cyborg city” was electrification.⁵⁰ Electrification effectively destroyed the material basis for factory chauvinism: while old industrial plants usually had their own power supply (and hence were fully independent from the rest of the city), now electrification of cities ended both the “individual enterprise and autonomous supply of energy.”⁵¹ This is how the “professional” and “urban” revolutions were welded together. Further, “electronic communication [helped to create] worldwide markets. ... [the telephone] greatly expanded the range, mobility and contact points between which messages could be sent, drawing millions of people into an simultaneous communication network.” Germany was pioneering in this – “Bismarck was the first political leader to grasp the value of long-distance telephone communication.”⁵² As I discussed in Chapter One, United States would soon outstrip Germany in brining about the professional and urban revolutions. And of course both ideals arrived to the Soviet Union through the United States. Hence Gastev’s utopias for a “vast continent unified by steel, electricity, and asphalt, of bright and throbbing machinery glinting in the sunlight as it labored to refashion a world.”⁵³ But the Bolsheviks took the electrification, urbanization and “cinematization” very seriously: “the city lives and leads. If you give up the city, that is if you let it be torn to pieces,” declared Trotsky in the 1920s. “Peasant Russia, deprived of the leadership of the city, not only will never get to Socialism, but will not be able to maintain itself for two months.”⁵⁴ The kilowatt-hour was suggested to serve as the “index of culture and progress.”⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, 65-68, 81.

⁴⁹ Munsterberg in: *Ibid.*, 219.

⁵⁰ Erik Swyngedouw, “Metabolic urbanization: the making of cyborg cities,” in *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*, ed. Erik Swyngedouw, Nik Heynen, and Maria Kaika (London: Routledge, 2005), 28-31.

⁵¹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night: The Industrialization of Light in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 72.

⁵² Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, 214.

⁵³ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 155.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁵⁵ Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, 140.

Just as the Americans were “making the world safe for democracy through motion pictures,”⁵⁶ as one of its pundits argued, cinema was critical for the making of the “new Soviet ‘we’” and forging socialism in one country. “Precisely in the same period,” Susan Buck-Morss argued, “the United States, laden with new immigrants, was promoting a melting-pot ideology that relied on silent cinema as it could rely on no other cultural institution. Churches, theatres, schools, holiday rituals, political organizations all embodied specific linguistic and ethnic traditions that worked against this goal. In contrast, Hollywood movies that screened *out* the past became a cultural force of mass assimilation.”⁵⁷ By revolutionizing the everyday through the urban, professional and cinematic revolutions, the world of the British industrial capitalism, of different copies of Manchester in various world localities, of satanic mills, of urban villagers and their factory chauvinism, was coming to an end. What emerged was integrated national economies, peppered with cities, in which urbanites and cinema-going (and later TV-watching) salaried masses worked and lived.

This change, seen from one angle, was actually an improvement. As Sennett stressed, the making of the “urban villagers” was not merely a side effect of the growth of nineteenth century industrial capitalism. “Localism and lower class [was] fused.” While the working classes were firmly “fixed” in urban space, the bourgeoisie monopolized the freedom of movement. “Routines of daily life passed outside the *quartier* were becoming bourgeois urban experience.” Their ability to move at relative ease from one place to another was the hallmark of their monopoly over the right to the city.⁵⁸ Likewise, Łódź’s “underelectrification” was a manifestation of uneven development at the local scale rather than its general “backwardness.” To Łódź, to be sure, electricity arrived relatively early, in the 1890s, but it remained in private hands, and was not accessible for the rank-and-file. It added splendor to the rich palaces, and the 163 electric street lamps that Łódź had in 1914, lit only the strictly bourgeois parts of the city.⁵⁹ Hence, the differences in the way electrification unfolded is not only restricted, as Thomas Hughes showed with regard to the London, Berlin and Chicago, “idiosyncrasies” of different countries, but it is also linked to class.⁶⁰ As I explained in Chapter Three, absence of city planning in Łódź, and the underdeveloped separation of the place of work from the place of residence (even for the mill owners!) stemmed from Łódź’s “relative position” in the larger field of power. Hence, also the absence of mass electrification. Likewise, this is how the fact that still in 1915 Bałuty constituted Europe’s largest village, formally separated from Łódź, has to be understood. Keeping the various parts of the city separate and isolated worked in favor of the prevailing class structures. Integration of various elements into a coherent whole was externally

⁵⁶ Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, 209.

⁵⁷ Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, 148, emphasis original.

⁵⁸ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 136-137.

⁵⁹ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 255-256.

⁶⁰ Thomas Parke Hughes, *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

achieved – the two grand incorporations of territories practically integrated into Łódź but administratively separate occurred during both World Wars and were by ordered by the German administration.⁶¹

As a result of the attempts to create a Nazi metropolis free of Jewry and with Poles reduced to pure manual labor force, the Polish urban villagers were set in motion. Those who did not flee to the countryside, were forced to move around the city – by mass evictions and mass unemployment (and rehiring people in often distant factories), as well as the sheer necessity of survival (searching for food and fuel, most often on foot). Just as in 1938, 69.2 million passengers traveled on Łódź's tramways, this number increased to 170 million in 1944.⁶² Between 1938 and 1960 the internal movement of people within Łódź increased fivefold: ridership in Łódź jumped from 104 trips per person per annum in 1938, to 580 in 1960.⁶³ This was also achieved through the increased “spatial diffusion of activities” (expanded separation of the place of work and the place of residence), manifested mainly in individuals inhabiting different places in the city for different purposes.⁶⁴ In order to facilitate such increased inter-dependency of various places, the erstwhile “islands” now became functionally related. As I argued in Chapter Five, initial attempts to built another Łódź, executed by individual enterprises such as Olimpia, were doomed to fail. Only large scale investments into suburban infrastructure, and the electricity, gas, water, sewage and other networks, undertaken after 1945 could weld the city together as a coherent organism. Łódź the smokestack city was gradually a matter of history. By 1961 already eighty of the three hundred of Łódź's emblematic chimneys had vanished; they were replaced by larger chimneys of two municipal thermal-electric power stations. Every other smokestack down was reported in the mass media as yet another step towards Łódź's brighter future, and a great leap forward “from the age of steam” to the “age of electricity.”⁶⁵

Mechanization of awareness

From human motors to *homo electronicus*

Gastev was, to be sure, both a visionary and a dreamer: his robots, the “animated machines and mechanized humans—were an exceptionally extreme and one-sided

⁶¹ Fijałek and Rosin, *Łódź*, 191.

⁶² Bojanowski, *Łódź pod okupacją*, 157-159, 177-179, 264, 310-311.

⁶³ Ginsbert, *Łódź*, 280; for figures in the West, see: Wally Seccombe, *Weathering the Storm: Working Class Families from the Industrial Revolution to the Fertility Decline*, 1st ed. (London: Verso, 1995), 132-135.

⁶⁴ Manuel Castells, *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*, ed. Ida Susser (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2002), 119.

⁶⁵ “Koniec kominów kominogrodu” [Farewell to chimneys of the smokestack city] *Odgłosy* 50 (1961): 12; see also: Mariusz Lamprecht, “Rola elektrociepłowni EC-4 w systemie energetycznym Łodzi,” in: *Przemysł w przestrzeni lokalnej*, ed. Tadeusz Marszał, 89-99 (Łódź: Uniwersytet Łódzki, 2003).

response to this experience and to the permanent menace of Russian backwardness.”⁶⁶ Soon, however, what was a “vision of hope” in the 1930s became increasingly a matter of lived experience in the post-war world, as science became regarded as the panacea for the sins of Stalinism. “When it turned out that words lied,” a Soviet pundit noted, “formulas looked more trustworthy.”⁶⁷ Science was invading the everyday life: in the 1960s and the 1970s the Soviet citizen “had only to pick up a journal or a newspaper, see a feature film, or listen to radio to find out about Soviet scientific achievements in reactor and rocket technologies, electrification, or Metro construction. Unlimited supplies of energy from fusion and fission would permit the full construction of communism by 1980. Permafrost would be conquered; deserts irrigated; dams built; and nuclear-powered transport would free Soviet industry from the shackles of prehistoric Ford tractors, clunky ZALs, and creaky trains. Soon nuclear-powered rockets would climb into the cosmos to other planets and solar systems.”⁶⁸ Gradually, what was referred to as the “scientific and technological revolution”—the Soviet block’s response to the post-industrial thesis and the growing salience of cybernetics—became the new “party-speak.”⁶⁹ The Soviet cybernetics movements “put forward the concept of computer-based objectivity as a substitute for the Stalinists principle of Party-mindedness of science,”⁷⁰ and fundamentally reshaped its political, economic and cultural spheres.⁷¹ In this chapter I focus on the latter, and I will return to the political and economic consequences of the “scientific and technological revolution” in Chapter Eight.

Łódź’s attempt to jump over the shadow of Poland’s Manchester has to be understood against that backdrop. Łódź did not have the chance for a more “regulated” and “orderly” urban tissue during the first fifty years of its rapid growth because of the “relative location” in the largely agricultural society. Now, Łódź had to reinvent itself in a new context – of a rapidly urbanizing countryside and expanding second-tier cities, to which industrial production was increasingly moved. The urban scale can be understood as a labor market: “geographical limits to daily labor markets express the limits to spatial integration at the urban scale.”⁷² I showed in Chapter Five how the

⁶⁶ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 155.

⁶⁷ Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 154.

⁶⁸ Paul Josephson, “Rockets, Reactors, and Soviet Culture,” in *Science and the Soviet Social Order*, ed. Loren R Graham (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), 189.

⁶⁹ Radovan Richta, ed., *Civilization at the Crossroads; Social and Human Implications of the Scientific and Technological Revolution*, 3rd ed. (White Plains, N.Y.): International Arts and Sciences Press, 1969), 14-15. See also: Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 289.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

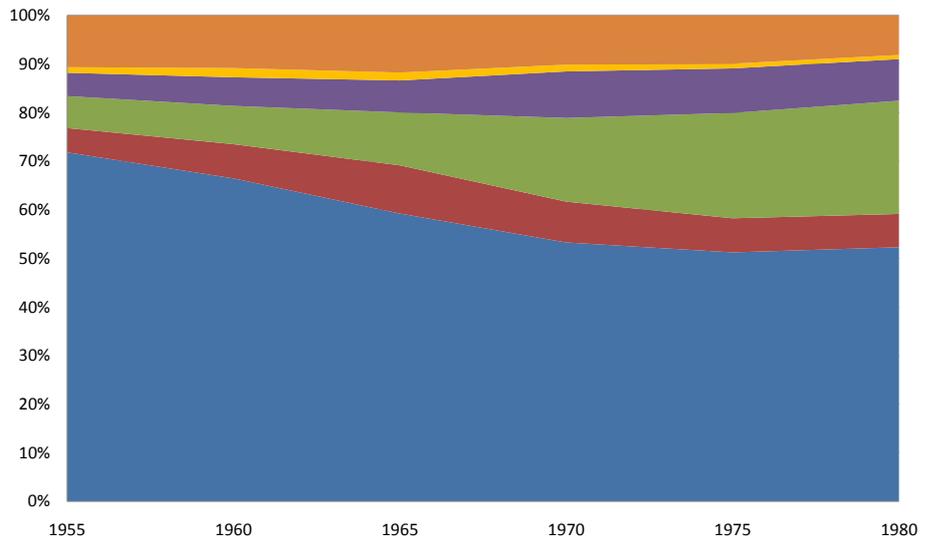
⁷¹ see also: Kendall E. Bailes, “The Politics of Technology: Stalin and Technocratic Thinking among Soviet Engineers,” *The American Historical Review* 79, no. 2 (April 1974): 445-469, David Holloway, “The Politics of Soviet Science and Technology,” *Social Studies of Science* 11, no. 2 (1981): 259-274, Susan E. Reid, “The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (April 1, 2005): 289-316; Eli Rubin, “East German Plastics: Technology, Gender and Teleological Structures of Everyday Life,” *German History* 25, no. 4 (October 2007): 596-624.

⁷² Smith, *Uneven Development*, 137.

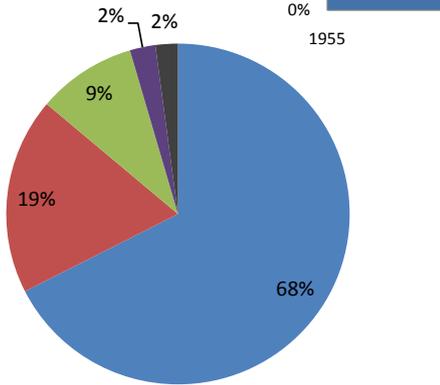
Plate eleven

Major trends in Łódź's occupational and industrial structure

■ Textile ■ Apparel ■ Machine and electronic ■ Chemical ■ Leather ■ Food



1931



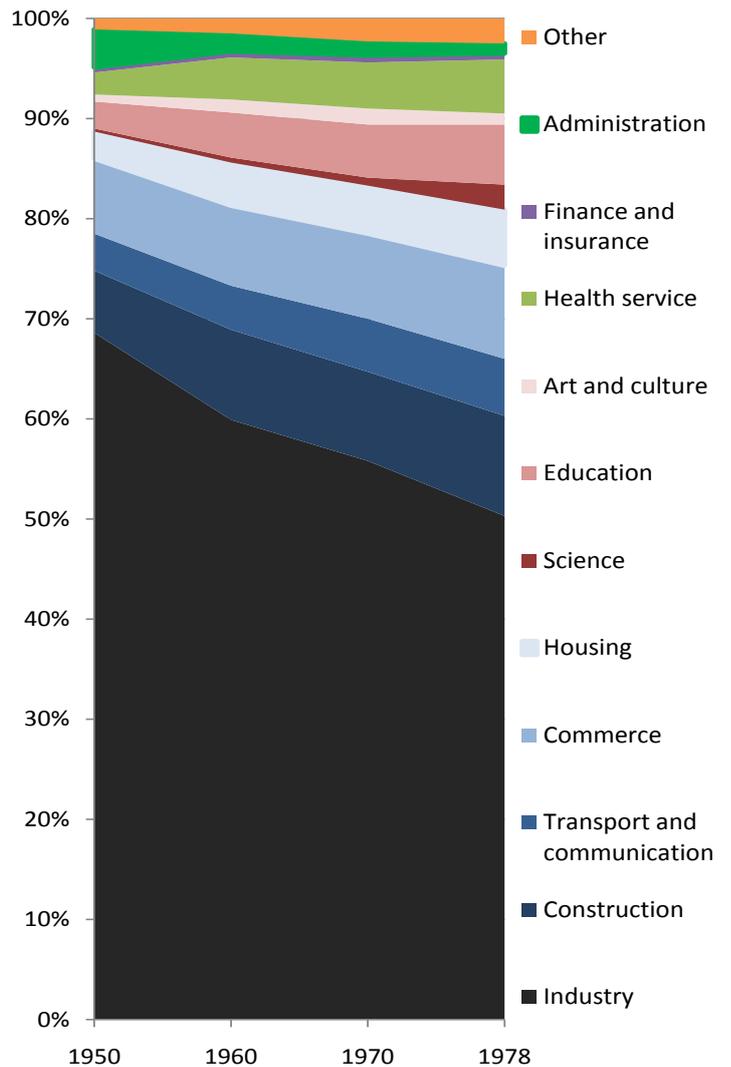
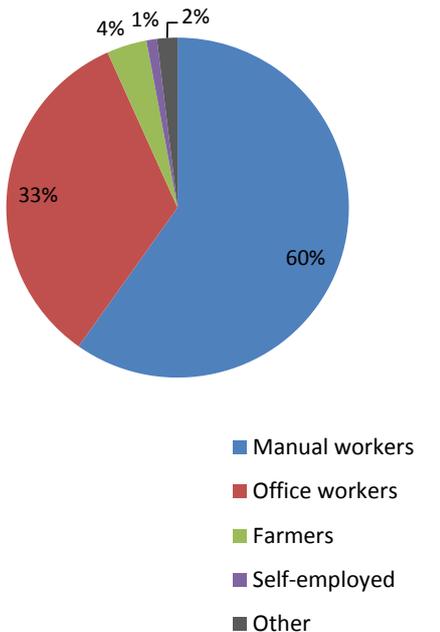
11.1

Structure of Łódź's industry (above)

11.2

Structure of Łódź's employment (below)

1970



11.3

Łódź's employment before and after the war

Sources: Kopczyńska-Jaworska Łódź, p. 47, Puś, Dzieje Łodzi, p. 27, Łódź w 35-ciu PRL, p. 22

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emergence of a “spoiled” labor market in post-war Łódź triggered the policy of industrial deglomeration. Integration of the urban scale not so much around textile industry but around more value-added activities that were not industrial (productive) but urban (consumptive) in nature was another consequence of that. This is why when Łódź authorities published in 1971 a thirty-page policy platform on the city’s “directions of development and modernization,” pundits quickly declared that this was the second such document in Łódź’s entire history. The first one was published in 1820 by the Polish Kingdom’s government, in which its key official announced that Łódź was to become a textile town.⁷³ Since 1945, the new document read, Łódź has become also “a center of education, science and culture,” and the new developments were to buttress this new aspect of the city mainly by technological innovation combined with extensive urbanization.⁷⁴

This incursion of technology into Łódź’s urban and industrial tissue was not only devised to modernize the existing textile sector. Rather, it was intended to change the structure of Łódź’s and its industry entirely, and to create a modern metropolis.⁷⁵ The initial phase of investments, it was argued, has only reinforced the existing structures (*inwestycje odtworzeniowe*). The modern Łódź, a “metropolis” of 850,000 inhabitants, was to become a “city of high-rise, fast communication, and apartment blocks,” and only new technology and new industry could do that.⁷⁶ The trouble with the old Łódź was that it was overly feminized (*przekobiecona*). Now Łódź had to be counterbalanced with high-tech industries that were more “masculine.” The “second leg” on which the modern Łódź was to stand were the machine, chemical and electronic industries. The West was moving its apparel production to Spain and Portugal, an economic journalist commented on a new forecast on Łódź’s development drafted in 1970, and it had even started importing textiles and semi-finished goods from the Third World countries. These have a single yet critical advantage over producers like Łódź: they have their own raw materials. This is why space for Łódź’s textiles and garment on the global market “will be shrinking,” the forecasts predicted.

Łódź’s apparel production was important domestically, however, because it can “turn the scales of the market equilibrium” (*języczek u wagi równowagi rynkowej*), and has an “important mission to fulfill – satisfy the hunger for modern commodities on the domestic market.” This is why, initially, the decline of textile sector in Łódź’s overall industrial profile was achieved by increased focus on the apparel industry, while later, from the mid 1960s onwards, the new focus was on the electrical and machine

⁷³ Krzysztof Pogorzałek “Między sercem a rozumem” [Between the heart and the reason] *Odgłosy* 43 (1971): 1, 3.

⁷⁴ Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza and Łódź, *Kierunki Rozwoju I Modernizacji Łodzi W Okresie 1971-1975 Orsz Założenia Na Dalsze Lata* (Łódź: Komitet Łódzki Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej, 1971), 5.

⁷⁵ Irena Dryll, “Technika ante portas” [Technology before the gates] *Odgłosy* 1 (1961): 1, 8.

⁷⁶ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Sposób na miasto” [A method for the city] *Odgłosy* 27 (1968): 5.

industries (see Plate Eleven). Both pathways would turn Łódź from a “textile center” into a “center of textile research and development” (*centrum myśli włókienniczej*). This is why the co-operation with post-colonial countries should be based upon “exporting whole factories,” and other value-added goods. This meant a total reconstruction of the city and its industry. “As once before, Łódź is embarking on a new journey” *Odgłosy* concluded. “Right now,” it declared in 1971, “we are standing at a crossroad, and we have to choose whether we take a dirt road or a motorway.”⁷⁷

This is how a new terms of “dialogue” between urbanization and industrialization (and not, as I argued in Chapter One, replacement of the latter by the former) were to reshape Łódź. The old cotton mills, that used to be the hallmark of Poland’s Manchester, although still operating and employing thousands of people, were gradually being eclipsed in the mass media by the bellwethers of the new changes such as the apparel producer Wólczanka (see Chapter Five) and Próchnik (see Chapter Eight) in the first phase, and plants like Elta transistor manufacturer and a number of plants from the machine industry in the second. But this brought a powerful rescaling of identity. While during Stalinism, the undisputable heyday of the large cotton mills, the Soviet-cum-American disciplining techniques that made the link between sports and labor, promoted Stakhanovites as the ideal workers, now the new model of mechanization of awareness was promoted. Stakhanovites, like the textile worker Wanda Gościńska (the virtuoso of “multi-machine work,” i.e. working on three spinning machines at the same time), reemerged in the public culture during the 1970s but only as icons of the age that was long gone.⁷⁸ She retired in 1973. Although “machines and the people at the factory have become part of my own self” (*zżyłam się z ludźmi i maszynami*), she was looking forward to the new developments, and well understood the new directions for change. “I think that retirement will give me the chance to catch up a bit,” she told the journalist. “I have a long list – unread books, unwatched films, theater, and last but not least a thorough sightseeing of Łódź. It is difficult to believe, but I learned about what has changed in my native city more from friend’s stories and the mass media rather than from my own observations.”⁷⁹

Workers engendered by the nineteenth century capitalism were, in Anson Rabinbach’s apt phrase, “human motors,” providers of sheer physical power.⁸⁰ Now the “multi-machine work” became heavily criticized (it was no longer practiced anyway) – improvement of quality and not merely ever larger qualities became the new emphasis.⁸¹ Just as workers in the old textile mills were providers of unskilled

⁷⁷ Krzysztof Pogorzelec, “Między sercem a rozumem.”

⁷⁸ Włodzisław Łuszczkiewicz, “Nie sposób zapomnieć” [It’s hard to forget] *Odgłosy* 50 (1973): 3. See also: Konrad Turowski, “Gołębiakowa” *Odgłosy* 10 (1975): 1, 5.

⁷⁹ In: Włodzisław Łuszczkiewicz, “Nie sposób zapomnieć.”

⁸⁰ Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*; see also Dunn, *Privatizing Poland*, 13.

⁸¹ Jerzy Kordacki, “Długa droga do prawdy (wspomnienie)” [The long journey to the truth] *Odgłosy* 42 (1974): 8, 9.

womanpower, the new technological challenges required skilled work. This entailed developing a completely new relationship between the machine and the human. The dusty, cramped, dark and stifling satanic mills were no longer. Elta established by a professor of the Łódź Polytechnic and staffed only by “technological aristocrats,” became the new darling (*benjaminek*) of city administration.⁸² The new suburban factories resembled, according to those who visited them, more science labs, where the automated production lines would do most of the physical labor.⁸³

The new place of the human being in the production process required the remaking of the worker identity, and deepened the mechanization of awareness. Cybernetics and urbanization combined refashioned the human as an information-processing machine. “Humans and machines are two kinds of control systems,” a Soviet propagator of “cyberspeak” explained, “which, operating in certain environments, pursued their goals (hitting a target, increasing order, achieving better organization, or reaching the state of equilibrium) by communicating with its environment, that is, sending and receiving information about the results of their actions through feedback.”⁸⁴ Just as the old mechanization of awareness was merely physical, the new cyborg-workers were to be forged mainly through the mechanization of mental operations. The division between physical and mental labor was, the new ideology held, “dialectically abolished” in the new industry (something that Gastev prophesied too).⁸⁵ The old world of the socialist economy as dominated by “factory chauvinism” and its paternalism was on the wane. The new ideal socialist subject was a skilled and educated worker, an urbanite, a state-employee and national citizen.⁸⁶ He or she would be loyal not their direct employers but to the state. He or she would not identify with their immediate urban milieu but with the city as a whole – also with places that one knew only from the mass media or from friend’s stories.

Hence the timeworn claim that Communist authorities pursued a wrong-headed policy of ignoring urbanization and the “socialist city” was merely a side effect of industrialization and central planning or their nearly manic-obsessive penchant for industrialization is wholly erroneous.⁸⁷ It may apply partially to the early years of the *Sturm und Drang* industrialization,⁸⁸ when most socialist cities were conceived of as variations of “company towns,”⁸⁹ and it may somehow apply to the 1980s, when the

⁸² Karol Badziak, “Chłopcy od Jezierskiego i 'Elty” [The Elta boys] *Odgłosy* 2 (1964): 4.

⁸³ Jerzy Urbankiewicz, “Fabryka bez ludzi” [A factory with no people] *Odgłosy* 13 (1967): 1, 3.

⁸⁴ In: Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 87.

⁸⁵ In labor legislation it was abolished only in 1974.

⁸⁶ Sütés, *Revolutionary Dreams*, chap. 9, see also: Catherine Alexander, “Soviet and Post-Soviet Planning in Almaty, Kazakhstan,” *Critique of Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (June 1, 2007): 165-181.

⁸⁷ For a typical “socialist city” argument see: György Enyedi, “Urbanization under Socialism,” in *Cities After Socialism: Urban and Regional Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*, ed. Gregory D Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Iván Szelényi, Studies in urban and social change (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1996), 115.

⁸⁸ The phase is Ivan Berend’s.

⁸⁹ Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, 103.

Socialist block plummeted into a dire crisis, and inner-cities were indeed becoming ever more derelict and abandoned (see Chapter Nine). Yet, during the time the Socialist economy was most robust, that is during the long 1960s, urbanization became an important, if not the most important, of both the objectives and means. This is how and when the *city as such* became for the first time a full-fledged scale and the primary unit of identity-formation to boot. To be sure, the real consequences of these changes were to be seen later: if still in the 1960s most of Łódź denizens identified with the “ecological district” they inhabited (and often worked in), a similar study from the 1990s showed that now most people identified with the city as a whole.⁹⁰ This was, as I already suggested, not restricted to Poland – also in France, as Castells noted, “social life [became] polarized around two extremes, the city and one’s residence, with scarcely any possibility of survival for ‘intermediary groups’ [of territorial collectivity] in modern society.”⁹¹ That rescaling of human identity was achieved by its “purification,” in the sense that urban identity was not much result of direct experience but of an (often imputed) fantasy. This is precisely what Gościńska hinted at: it was difficult to know “personally” the emergent new Łódź that differed so much from the Polish Manchester that she grew up in. Not accidentally, the rescaling of identity during the long Sixties was accompanied by the powerful emergence of electronic mass media in the lives of many people. This also had a huge impact on what the meaning of being an inhabitant of Łódź actually became. I will devote Part Three to the description of precisely that.

Splendid isolation and the rescaling of labor

The bygone world of the urban villagers was, to borrow Witold Kula’s phrase, “anthropometric,”⁹² that is its scale was adjusted to the scale of the human body. While the workplace was heavily mechanized, the *Lebenswelt* outside of it remained largely insulated from the mechanization of awareness. Workers inhabited a territory where everything they needed was within a walking distance. The key word in the “cyborgization” of workers, as well as for cybernetic technology as such, was precision; Gastev’s “revolution in time” and increased orderliness of both work and the life outside of it was achieved by increasingly exact measurement.⁹³ As I already argued, precision in time measurement was achieved by electrification; and electric current was the quintessence of speed – “nothing moved faster than the electricity that raced through conduits, powering motors and accelerating a variety of activities.”⁹⁴ Electricity

⁹⁰ Piotrowski, *Spoleczno-Przestrzenna Struktura Miasta Łodzi*, 22. Zbigniew Rykiel and Polska Akademia Nauk, *Przemiany Struktury Spoleczno-Przestrzennej Miasta Polskiego a Świadomość Terytorialna Jego Mieszkańców* (Wrocław: Continuo, 1999), 56, 139-140. Karpińska, Kopczyńska-Jaworska, and Woźniak, *Pracować żeby żyć*, 86.

⁹¹ Castells, *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*, 58.

⁹² Witold Kula, *Measures and Men* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁹³ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 153, see also: Donald A MacKenzie, *Inventing Accuracy: An Historical Sociology of Nuclear Missile Guidance* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990).

⁹⁴ Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, 114.

hence become the vehicle for abstraction from a place. It was the main force behind the urban blurring of day and night (a distinction as strict for urban as for rural villagers), as well as suburbanization – that brought the “virtues” of city life to the peripheries.⁹⁵ Electricity was also seen as the major solution to the most burning problem of “human motors” – fatigue.⁹⁶ By the turn of the centuries, “electricity, energy and life were synonymous.” As a “pure, odourless and non-psychical form of energy” electricity was made “immediately acceptable in drawing-rooms. Electricity did not endanger life or health,” it was argued, “on the contrary, it was regarded as positively beneficial, almost as a sort of vitamin.” Electricity consumption was argued to be a remedy for fatigue; “in agriculture, electricity was used like a fertilizer” – land was literally galvanized in order to increase its productivity.⁹⁷

While subjugation of the working body to the scientific calculus of increased productivity was, as Rabinbach argued, the “paradigm” for the nineteenth century, the eclipse of urban villages, of the “work-centered society,” and the end of the “human motors,” did not automatically entail, as the prophets of the post-industrial thesis maintained, the obsolescence of the body, and the disappearance of work and physical activity in a “cybernetic fusion” of man (or rather their brain) and machine.⁹⁸ Instead, the man-machine nexus spilled out of the abode of production, and fundamentally reshaped the way workers regarded their bodies. While for the scientific managers of work fatigue was the main problem to be solved when organizing the labors of “human motors,” for the human motors themselves, the major fear was being broken down by the machine. One of the most celebrated scenes in Reymont’s novel is one where a worker’s piece of garment is accidentally caught in between machine cogs; as a result, the enormous driving wheel “whirled him aloft ... spun him round and round, crumpled him up, broken him on the machine, crushed him, smashed him, and thrown the shattered mass aside, never stopping in its course for one moment.”⁹⁹

Łódź’s folklore is awash with such stories. A non-professional novel on post-1905 Łódź tells a story of how “the strongest man in Widzew” was broken down by a machine and became a beggar. During one of his drinking nights, the daredevil called Boleś decided to challenge his buddies in an “athletic” duel: “Boleś proudly displayed his muscles, and got in a mangle. – If you get me through this, I will give you a ruble, he exclaimed. He braced his feet, and flexed his muscles. Then there was only a sudden crack and a cry. They got him out bended in half, unconscious, his bones broken.”¹⁰⁰ Now the all-

⁹⁵ Ibid., 192.

⁹⁶ Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, 48.

⁹⁷ Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*, 71.

⁹⁸ Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, 289-300.

⁹⁹ Reymont, *The Promised Land*, 176. See also: Jerzy Ryszard Krzyżanowski, *Władysław Stanisław Reymont*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), 61-63.

¹⁰⁰ Antoni Rydlewski, *Tygiel*, 16-17.

encompassing electrification ushered in new dystopias.¹⁰¹ There is a poignant vignette in Kieślowski's documentary showing how the workers of Łódź were gradually accommodating to the unsettling electrification. In one of the park scenes, Kieślowski filmed a middle aged man, with a eerie stand comprising of an accumulator and two rods, surrounded by a crowd of inquisitive onlookers. For a little money he offered them the chance to "challenge electricity." What they had to do is to hold the rods in their hands, while the man was slowly increasing the voltage. At a point one could no longer endure the pain, one had to stay "stop;" the then man turned off the machine, and read out the "score." It was clearly a masculine entertainment – the men in various ages stood around the curious machine and compared their the number of volts they "had" with great enthusiasm and cheered one another.¹⁰²

Of course Kieślowski was not the only one who recorded the impact of electrification upon the working-class culture. The new form of identity that replaced the "human motor" was even given a name by a Polish theorist – *homo electronicus*. The notion was coined by a professor in biochemistry, who argued that the urban habitat engendered new forms of life – bioelectronic, and the human body, now surrounded by various technological devices each emitting electromagnetic field, was now subject to stimuli of a different sort that mounted new challenges.¹⁰³ *Homo electronicus*, coined in the late 1970s, was already partially dystopian. During the long Sixties, the incursion of technology into the everyday lives was generally, as in the entire Soviet block, seen as a liberation from the exploitative world of nineteenth century capitalism. While "human motors" rebelled against the old machines that they had to adjust to (in Łódź already in 1861 weavers destroyed the first steam machines in a Luddist outrage), now the modern urban proletariat, the argument run, had no reasons to fear – machines would work for the people and not instead of them. Home appliances, such as the washing machine, freed workers from their drudgery, and no woman in Łódź would ever again "die of the laundry" (i.e. suffer of rheumatism), Andrzej Brycht promised.¹⁰⁴ Just as Saturdays in Łódź were traditionally spend on washing clothes, now women would have more free time for leisure and cultural consumption.

Old predicaments of working and living in Poland's Manchester were to pass away. But new ones quickly arrived – and "stress" was first on the list. It was the quintessential "cyborg" malady – the human was no longer a mere provider of physical power, but an information-processing machine. And hence a potential source of error that, in theory,

¹⁰¹ Zygmunt Fijas, "Cybernetyczni ludzie w Działoszynie" [The cybernetic people in Działoszyn] *Odgłosy* 25 (1969): 6.

¹⁰² Krzysztof Kieślowski, *Z miasta Łodzi*.

¹⁰³ Włodzimierz Sedlak, *Homo Electronicus* (Warszawa: Państw. Instytut Wydawniczy, 1980). See also: Włodzimierz Sedlak, "Homo electronicus i jego świat" [Homo electronicus and his world] *Odgłosy* 23 (1981): 6, Włodzimierz Sedlak, "Homo electronicus – klucz do zrozumienia życia" [Homo electronicus – the key for understanding the world] *Odgłosy* 23 (1981): 6, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Andrzej Brycht, "Pokutnice bez winy" [The innocent penitents] *Odgłosy* 4 (1960): 1, 8.

could potentially jeopardize the otherwise smoothly automated production process.¹⁰⁵ Stress was democratic and encroached on everybody: textile workers who could not keep up with the pace of production,¹⁰⁶ porters trying to catch thieving workers,¹⁰⁷ students preparing for exams,¹⁰⁸ or managers who realized the chasm between their tasks and their knowledge (hence stress at work propelled them to study¹⁰⁹). In the old tenements of Bałuty, now surrounded “from all the sides” by the new apartment blocks, the old workers took sedatives (*waleriana*), and the hens they reared (regular stock of urban villagers) “stopped laying eggs as a consequence of stressful metropolitan life.”¹¹⁰ Stress was also deemed as the prime cause of cancer – again a “new” problem among the urban population that eclipsed tuberculosis, mainly a consequence of terrible living conditions.¹¹¹

Such rescaling of identity, first from the neighborhood to the city as a whole, from urban villagers to full-fledged urbanites, was also connected to productive changes. Technology was precisely the meeting point between industrialization and urbanization. The movement away from the anthropocentric scale had two facets: upward and downward, so to speak. The upward scaling was tied to the emergence of a city that was unfit for the “bare” human body – and one had to use prostheses (such as mass transit for example) to inhabit it; this upward scaling was symbolically linked to the erection of high-rise. The downward scaling away from the anthropocentric scale, on the other hand, was mainly achieved through precision work. Before I return to the upward scaling in Chapter Eight, and in Chapter Nine I will describe the 1980s movement trying to return to the human scale (under the slogan “small is beautiful”), I need to draft the salience for downward rescaling of labor for the more general process of rescaling of identity. While all that was necessary to work in the textiles were “nimble hands” (or as in Gościmiska’s case physical agility), the new cyborg worker required first “adequate knowledge” and second “eagle eye and perfect hearing” for the tasks that again were beyond the capacities of a “bare” human body. But this new precision work, and this is the crucial link between technological and spatial changes, was, as it was argued, impossible to achieve in the “noisy” and “crowded” inner-city. Both the new machines, and the new workers, required the suburban “splendid isolation” for their high-tech and high-precision production.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ Paul N Edwards, *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996), 235-237.

¹⁰⁶ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Dłonie na przędzy” [Hands on the yarn] *Odgłosy* 14 (1965): 1, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Julian Brysz, “Piekące skarpetki” [The itching socks] *Odgłosy* 18 (1966): 1, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Ewa Siemińska, “Stress studio” [The stressful university life] *Odgłosy* 42 (1967): 1, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Feliks Bąbol, “Sekretarz” [The first secretary] *Odgłosy* 30 (1968): 1, 3.

¹¹⁰ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Na Bałutach wielkie poruszenie” [Great commotion in Bałuty] *Odgłosy* 29 (1974): 4.

¹¹¹ Jerzy Czech, “Stressy a rak” [Cancer and stress] *Odgłosy* 32 (1977): 9.

¹¹² Jan Bąbiński, “Strzelczyk i mikrony” [The Strzelczyk mill and precision mashines] *Odgłosy* 27 (1970): 1, 3; Jan Bąbiński, “Fabryczne konsylium” [The industrial conference] *Odgłosy* 28 (1965): 1, 3.

The new electronic and machine industry, although often a continuation of old mills located in the inner-city, were built, like Elta that I already mentioned, on the city's fringe, amidst empty fields, which, a journalist reported, was "initially was an extraordinary sight."¹¹³ The new workers were no longer human motors, but cybernetic subjects, whose task was, among other things, to use technological prostheses to extend their senses. Nobody understood this better than as a former tailor who now worked for the Strzelczyk metalworks, Łódź's flagship "male" enterprise. The Kilińskiego street that Strzelczyk used to be located in, was rebuilt into a wide alley (more on the automobile in Chapter Seven). The young man came to the Strzelczyk because tailoring was "too feminine, too frail and tedious. And I was attracted by modernity and technology... When I arrived [in 1959] I had no clue what metalwork was. I was used to the tape measure, and here I had to deal with microns! (*siedziałem przy centymetrze, a tutaj mikrony!*). I could not understand that a millimeter can be further divided into smaller units. How does one measure these microns?"¹¹⁴ One micron was crucial for working on the high-precision grinders, and it seems not accidental that Gastev, the prophet of precision and accuracy, had an extensive background in the machine industry.

In the 1960s Strzelczyk was producing small batches of machines for Western contractors, and the new equipment "would not err by more than one micron ... [Such a machine] can bear no vibration, no fluctuation in temperature nor air humidity ... these are aristocratic machines...these nearly thinking machines that are automated by themselves have to be ideally isolated from outside interference. They work like the best computer if they are provided with *splendid isolation*. And only highly skilled hands and most talented brains can operate these wonderful automata. A proper grinder operator (*rasowy szlifierz*) is as rare a phenomenon as a proper footballer. He needs to be endowed with ideal hearing, eagle eye, calmness of a cosmonaut, and stamina of a long-distance cyclist."¹¹⁵ Of course the computer was the quintessence of precision work, and various factories gradually introduced the new information-processing technology. The Polish-made ODRA computer, *Odgłosy* marveled, stored information on a cylinder – a recording head placed 20 microns away from it wrote and read information from its ferromagnetic surface. "Just imagine this: 20 microns, 1/50 of a millimeter. What a distance! (*to się nazywa odległość*). Technological miniaturization has not yet developed an adequate language." And further: "In around one-tenth of a second, ODRA can raise 986743289 to the third power. And makes no mistake! What sort of efficient task can a human perform in one tenth of a second? None! Exactly! This is why the human creates machines that work faster than him, so they can be at his service."¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Karol Badziak, "Chłopcy od Jezierskiego i 'Elty'."

¹¹⁴ Ryszard Binkowski, "Śpiew żelaza i astry" [Asters and the singing iron] *Odgłosy* 42 (1973): 1, 6.

¹¹⁵ Jan Bąbiński, "Strzelczyk i mikrony."

¹¹⁶ Włodzimierz Stokowski, "Od ODRY 1003 do ZAM – 41" *Odgłosy* 22 (1967): 1, 4, 5.

This is why it was not entirely true that the new machine will be working for and not instead of people. Just as it was difficult for many to endure high voltage in the park, many others, especially workers with pre-1939 background, found it difficult to adjust to the new speed and precision – both in the workplace and outside of it. A 59-year old worker, interviewed in 1969, admitted he is tired of constant re-skilling. “I will not lose my job, but I do not want to be a factory doormat (*zakładowe popychadło*).” The journalist commented: “I understand that man and his fear of professional degradation.” Technological progress “does not unfold without tensions. It begs sacrifice. Sometimes it triggers resistance of the people whose consciousness had been shaped by the old machinery (*świadomość ukształtowana na wzór starych maszyn*). Their minds are not as receptive and their hands can no longer perform precision work.”¹¹⁷ “What they need is flexibility (*elastyczność*), and the “right attitude” (*postawa*) towards the change. “Even older workers managed to adapt somehow. Many an old textile worker, whose life was never all roses, managed to retrain and face up to technological challenges.”¹¹⁷ Precisely such people who were no longer able to “adapt” to the new society, became “arrested” in Łódź’s past and its inner-city, and became of interest to photographers, folklorists and filmmakers.

They were soon called by a common name – the “Łódź types” (*typy łódzkie*). Kiesłowski even called them the “monsters from Łódź” (*potwory łódzkie*), in a commentary on another documentary where an assemblage of people from Łódź’s streets were put into an arranged tavern and filmed. “Fellini often used them in his films. But I think that the monsters living in Łódź were far more expressive than those of Fellini,”¹¹⁸ he recalled. Hence, “Łódź is a photogenic town, because it’s dirty and shabby” he explained. “People’s faces look like the walls of Łódź. Tired, sad faces, with a dramatic meaninglessness in their eyes. Lives spent standing in the same spot, never getting anywhere.” Those urban villagers, shaped by the textile machines and the tiny world surrounding it, were to be found still on Łódź’s streets – and Kiesłowski shows them in his film too. A typical “Łódź type” was precisely such as old mill worker standing in a gate, or an old busker, beggar, hawker selling flowers, garment, or even violins.¹¹⁹ Łódź revealed to Kiesłowski as “cruel and unusual. Singularly picturesque with its dilapidated buildings, dilapidated staircases, dilapidated people.”¹²⁰

There was no place for them in the modern metropolis. As a Warsaw pundit wrote: “nowadays one would hardly stop listen to homegrown buskers (*grajek*). Even subconsciously we receive their music as utter petty bourgeoisie kitsch (*kicz z jeleniem na rykowisku*). If we throw him a penny, then only from our sense of pity – that’s the

¹¹⁷ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Czy będziemy metropolią” [Will be become a metropolis] *Odgłosy* 41 (1969): 7.

¹¹⁸ Krzysztof Kiesłowski, *O Sobie*, (Kraków: Znak, 1997), 73.

¹¹⁹ See: Waclaw Biliński, *Łódź jaką znam*.

¹²⁰ quoted in: Haltof, *The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski*, 8.

only emotion they stir in us in the present age.”¹²¹ The sacking of Ciuksza was precisely part of that cultural urban change. This is how Kieślowski recalled years later on that transitional moment: “I think we were the first people after the war ... who sought to describe the world as it was. Of course these were tiny worlds, in fact worlds in a drop of water: a primary school, a factory, a hospital, an office.” They did that because “it is hard to live in a world lacking idea on itself. You will not comprehend this unless you lived, like us, in a non-represented world. It is as if you lived without identity.”¹²² It was precisely that new identity that was in the making.

Emergent consumer society

The end of urban villagers, of the “work-oriented society” and of the nineteenth century industrial capitalism has often been linked with the eclipse of class. I have been arguing in this study against such a narrowly conceived understanding of class. “Work” – a category that was indeed overarching concept for the nineteenth century cultural imagination,¹²³ was eclipsed in cities, as the mechanization of awareness extended beyond the workplace. This is why, as Manuel Castells argued, “fundamentally the urban question refers to the organization of the means of collective consumption at the basis of the daily life of all social groups: housing, education, health, culture, commerce, transport.” And it is the state that organizes, through its remaking of the city, this collective consumption.¹²⁴ Urban consumption became the new turf of class struggles.

Of course, as I have already shown in Chapter Three, consumption had been crucial for class also *before* the age of Industrial Revolution and the textile cotton mills. As I will discuss below and in greater detail in Part Three, some aspects of the class-based organization of collective consumption were a continuation of the *ancien régime* trends – and especially the issue of conspicuous consumption. But there were also new developments – such as consumption of urban amenities. Electricity, for example, could be consumed directly, as some people did in its early years, as a form of medication. But electricity was consumed in a much more mundane sense – and indeed it was the very *first* public amenity that was made nearly universally accessible in Poland. Łódź had been largely electrified already during the interwar period, and its index of electrification did not differ overmuch from that of other Polish cities (see Plate Ten). In other words, calling the new urban model that Łódź was heading towards the “age of electricity” was safer, since by the 1960s an overwhelming majority of Łódź denizens had everyday access to electric current. Other public amenities, such as sewage or running water especially, were much more stratified, and most apartments in Łódź had

¹²¹ writing in 1965, in: Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 220.

¹²² Quoted in Tadeusz Miczka, “We live in a world lacking idea of itself: Krzysztof Kieślowski's Art of Film”, *Kinema*, Spring 1997.

¹²³ Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, chap. 2.

¹²⁴ Manuel Castells, *City, Class, and Power* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 3, Castells, *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*, 107-108.

electricity but no running water, or sewage. Electricity was hence politically “safe,” whereas water, for example, remained to be highly contentious. I will devote Chapter Seven precisely to this.

The very fact that Łódź, for the very first time in its history, had its own weekly was precisely a portend of the spatial integration around the urban scale. Its first editor-in-chief wrote in an editorial that *Odgłosy*’s main task was to “show the interdependence of labor and culture.” Access to the means of collective consumption was the persisting polarizing factor in the post-war Łódź. Łódź, he insisted, was a dual city (*Łódź A i Łódź B*). The first one “has everything: cinemas, theaters, access to well supplied retail stores; those living in the other Łódź have to waste time (*mitrężą czas*) on chasing scarce goods in stores scattered all around the city. All this is time lost to cultural consumption.” Hence the urgent need to “organize and modernize” the city, so everybody’s access to cultural amenities would become equal.¹²⁵ This is also how planning authorities defined the socialist city: “city that is adequate to our political system is one where everybody has equal access to public services. All districts ought to be equally saturated with services of mass use, and they should have an equal access to unique services located in the city center. In a socialist city it unthinkable to make some districts better and others worse with regard to access to services.”¹²⁶ Before 1939, these have been highly concentrated in the inner-city. The storming of the working-class to the inner-city that begun in 1945 was precisely intended to gain access to culture. As we saw in the previous chapter, this was unsustainable. Hence, now the policy of the “universalization of culture,”¹²⁷ wherein suburbanization went hand in hand with granting people equal access to cultural goods, became the main objective of socialism. But, as the Ciuksza example showed, some groups had more rights to cultural consumption than others. That distinction will be come ever more salient and will constitute the backbone of the cultural neo-Jagiellonization, as the reader will see in Part Three.

While the 1905 revolution was, as I argued in Chapter Three, mainly production-centered, and so was, up to a point, the post-war striking wave in Łódź, the working-class unrest in post-war Poland after 1956 was increasingly consumption-oriented. This became wholly visible during the 1970s “consumer socialism.”¹²⁸ The notorious socialist dearth of consumer goods (and especially durables), the hallmark of the 1980s crisis economy, spurred most to conclude that the transition “from production to consumption” started in earnest only after 1989. This might have been the case from the

¹²⁵ Wiesław Jażdżyński, “Precz z jubileuszem” [Instead of celebrations] *Odgłosy* 3 (1960): 1, 2.

¹²⁶ Marian Benko, “Miasto przyszłości” [The city of the future] *Odgłosy* 4 (1966) 1, 3.

¹²⁷ Shore, *Caviar and Ashes*, 278.

¹²⁸ Susan Emily Reid and David Crowley, eds., *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

vantage point of 1989.¹²⁹ Yet, as I argued in Chapter Five, the post-socialist road had been largely open before 1981. Elizabeth Dunn compellingly described how American managers who were “restructuring” the Polish baby-food producer thought that they were building consumer niches (and hence forms of consumer identity) on a clean slate.¹³⁰ Yet, this firm started producing its baby food products already in the 1970s as part of a national marketing campaign that sought to convince Polish parents that babies are consumers too (“*Niemowlę też człowiek*”).¹³¹ Just as in the West, in socialist countries “the ideology of redemption through labor [was replaced by] the redemptive character of the individual possession of non-productive goods.”¹³² This nascent socialist “consumer society” became conspicuous during the food riots often following the price hikes (in 1951, 1956, 1970, 1976 and 1980). Just as Battle Over Trade “appeased” the Łódź workers in 1947, consumption, it was argued, in a way “replaced free voting and political opposition” in the socialist Poland. The notorious “sausage wagons” were used for breaking strikes – precisely because these were not about production but about consumption.¹³³ One of the major outcomes of the *Solidarność* movement was the institutionalization of the Polish consumer society – as the Federation of Consumers, an “independent and uncompromising” grassroots organization, representing interests of Poles who by 1981 openly regarded themselves as consumers.¹³⁴

Urban theatre of class struggles

Chamstwo urbanized

One of the most brilliant aspects of Sennett’s *The Fall of Public Man* is the analogy between the stage and the street that informs his analysis of how public life changed throughout various epochs. Because his analysis is restricted to Europe’s two largest cities, Paris and London, there is a certain sense of linearity of historical process in his argument. The public life of the *ancien régime*, marked by spontaneity of impersonal expression in the public realm, was eclipsed by the cult of personality and a strict separation of the stage from the audience that represented the Romantic response to industrial urbanization. That separation, argued Sennett, still holds. The elite grip over the public realm was not as strong everywhere, however. The 1905 revolution in Łódź, for example, unlike the earlier 1848 revolt in Paris described by Sennett, was entirely

¹²⁹ Frances Pine, “From Production to Consumption in Post-Socialism?,” in *Poland Beyond Communism: “transition” in Critical Perspective*, ed. Michał Buchowski, (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 2001), 209-224.

¹³⁰ Dunn, *Privatizing Poland*, chap. 3.

¹³¹ Marek Rogalski, “Firma zobowiązuje” [The corporation obliges] *Odgłosy* 42 (1974): 2.

¹³² Stanley Aronowitz, *The Politics of Identity: Class, Culture, Social Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 241.

¹³³ I owe this point to Elizabeth Dunn (personal communication 21 October 2009).

¹³⁴ Malgorzata Mazurek and Matthew Hilton, “Consumerism, Solidarity and Communism: Consumer Protection and the Consumer Movement in Poland,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 42, no. 2 (April 1, 2007): 315-343.

spontaneous and was not quelled by a “charismatic leader” who was “a believable, moving public performer, a personality of authority who could impose on his working-class audiences that discipline of silence which the bourgeois audience normally imposed on itself in the domain of Art.”¹³⁵ This unruliness of the Łódź Revolution was not a sign of “backwardness” but rather of its democratic and grassroots character, as well as the the incapability of the Polish elites to control the urban public realm. The very first attempts to police the urban public life, in both the street and the theater, and to draw the line between a passive mass audience and a handful of leaders anointed by Art, History, God (or all of them at once) to rule the “common people,” came already during the antebellum period, most notably in Warsaw. After 1945 it became the new axis of social conflict and the main vehicle for the urbanization of *chamstwo*.

The kernel of modern *chamstwo*, as its most perspicacious theorist Witold Gombrowicz pointed out, was contained in the elite fear of physical proximity with the riff-raff. His *Ferdurke* (1938), “an infernal novel,” as Sartre once called it, based upon objects “which destroy themselves in their very act of contraction,”¹³⁶ analyzed the imminent mixing of classes and the enormous fear of the Polish post-gentry elite of the blending of *chamstwo* and its very opposite the *państwo* (“their lordliness”) into one. Gombrowicz’s vision was indeed prophetic: World War Two indeed destroyed the class divisions of the *ancien régime* and the very first post-war decade was marked by the enormous social chaos. While during the Jagiellon epoch the szlachta was spatially separated from the serfs, now the “common people” overran the city, and practically took over the street (as we saw in Chapter Five). “Private” space was in retreat. But also “public” events were particularly “chaotic” and the largely juvenile crowd unruly. During the Stalinist May Day parades, for example, “Łódź’s narrow streets were so densely thronged with people that one could not distinguish the various parading groups from one another, and onlookers practically blended with the parading crowd. People occupied spaces where public was officially not allowed in. Many climbed bus and tram stops. The space designated for the parade literally “burst out” from the excess of people.”¹³⁷

Such spatial chaos was the greatest threat to the class integrity of the post-Jagiellon Polish elite. “This lord whom History, in its merciless progression, was depriving of his estates and of his power,” wrote Gombrowicz in *Ferdurke*, “had remained after all a thoroughbred in body and soul, but particularly in body! He could endure agricultural reform and legal and political equalization in a general sense, but his blood boiled at the thought of personal and physical equality, at fra...ternization of his person. ... Let them take away his estate! Let them introduce the reforms! But don’t expect his lordship’s

¹³⁵ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 224.

¹³⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, “Itinerary of a Thought,” *New Left Review* 58 (1969): 55.

¹³⁷ Paweł Sowiński, *Komunistyczne Święto: Obchody 1 Maja W Latach 1948-1954*, W Krainie PRL (Warszawa: Trio, 2000), 47.

hand to seek out the farmhand's hand, let not his noble cheeks seek out the boorish hand."¹³⁸ As Gombrowicz anticipated, it was easier to abrogate formal privileges and nationalize the manorial estates than to eradicate the "time-honored hierarchy ... based upon the supremacy of the lordly parts ... in which his lordship's hand was level with the servant's mug, and his leg was at the peasant's midriff."¹³⁹ Of course in the *ancien régime*, there was daily physical interaction between the *chamstwo* and their masters. But it was regulated by the time-worn custom, and the aesthetic of "easy beauty" blunted physical class violence by turning it into paternalistic care. "The most unpleasant aspect of this situation," noted Gombrowicz, "was that their lordships seemed to be looked after by the peasants, and even though they actually lorded over the peasants and exploited them, it seemed to an outsider that the peasants coddled them, as if their lordships were the yokels' little darlings—and the foreman, as auntie's slave, carried her across a puddle, and it seemed that he was coddling her."¹⁴⁰

In urbanizing Poland, noted Gombrowicz, the rules of physical interaction between "their lordships" and the *chamstwo* were different. "Those of us living in the city didn't even feel like lords of the manor, we dressed, spoke and gestured the same way as the proletariat, and a myriad of imperceptible semitones united us with the proletariat—going down the rungs of society to the shopkeepers, the street car conductor, the cabdriver, one could inconspicuously go down all they way to the garbage collector." This was still different in the 1930s countryside, where feudal hierarchies were deeply entrenched, and where "lordliness towered like a lonely poplar in all its nakedness." In the city, on the other hand, "services were provided in a roundtable way, in a discretionary manner—each to each, a little at a time—while [in the country] the squire had an actual personal yokel, who, when the squire raised his leg, would clean his shoe."¹⁴¹ The aunty and the uncle that Gombrowicz described in 1938 were still living in the old ways, unaware that the mixing of classes, "peasants and lordship tumbling and kneading one another without shame,"¹⁴² that occurred on a daily basis in the city, was inevitably to come. Already in 1938 "the servants were proudly raising their heads ... What will happen, what will transpire when this penetrates to my aunt and uncle, and his lordship's face stands face to face with the peasant's lumpish mug?"¹⁴³ This was precisely the most vexing problem of the post-war urban encounters.

Before 1939, a rural *cham* could be distinguished from an urban *pan* (lord) in a split of a second – both were "humans of a different breed," as Bogusz-Dzierżkowska noted (see Chapter Four). Now, they increasingly looked the same. Also, it became customary to

¹³⁸ Witold Gombrowicz, *Ferdydurke*, trans. Danuta Borchartd (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 253.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 232-233.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 277.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 235.

refer to strangers as *pan* – today a common and polite way of addressing a male stranger (*pani* for females), an equivalent of the German *Sie* or the Spanish *usted*. The city was hence a place of democratization – but that democratization entailed allowing the *chamstwo* to raise to the level of *państwo*. In the course of that democratization, the post-*szlachta* cultural practices were inculcated into the new urbanites by the old urbanites – that, as I noted already, were largely concentrated in the gentry-dominated Warsaw. This was the very source what Brzostek described as the “solemnity of public space” in Poland.¹⁴⁴ It was the policing of the street life driven by the fear of proximity: “Oh, I finally understood the cause of their strange anxiety and constraint, which struck everyone coming from the city to visit a country manor,” wrote Gombrowicz. “It was the rabble that scared gentry.” What was most scary was “to be constantly refracted by the boorish prism of a servant who has access to your rooms, who hears your conversations, who watches your behavior, who is allowed to serve coffee at your table or at your bedside—to be the subject of coarse, fallow, insipid kitchen prattle, and never be able to explain yourself on an equal footing.” Hence, “their perpetual, secret festering.”¹⁴⁵ This mix of anxiety and constraint was, unlike what Gombrowicz claimed, also visible in the antebellum cities, and especially in the “solemn” Warsaw. A Croatian visitor described 1930s Warsaw thus: “is not good form here to whistle or sing in the street. People do not talk on the tram. Nobody laughs. Nobody screams in this city. Nobody is joyful and nobody smiles. Even whores walk on the streets solemnly as if there were grave matriarchs (*poważne jak matrony*).”¹⁴⁶

The post-war mixing and, to use Gombrowicz’s phrase, social “tumbling and kneading,” was also visible in the urban palimpsest. Just as capitalist urban space was relatively easy to decipher, visitors from the West (or Poles who left in 1939) constantly complained that Polish urban space was drab and “difficult to read.” This was, in part, a consequence of the assault on the vestiges of the “capitalist and cosmopolitan” city executed by the authorities in collusion with the working-class double moral bookkeeping. Meat and garment stores, for example, would be hard to distinguish, as information on what kind of merchandise was available inside was often given on a small notice (that tended to get lost), and the windows, especially in winter, would get steamed up. Neon light and other signboards were rare. To find out what sort of store it was, one often had to actually walk inside. Public amenities (such as toilets) were difficult to find, and one had spend considerable time looking for them. City maps were scarce. Often taxis looked like other automobiles, and public transit did not have routes adequately marked. The city was legible only for “insiders.”¹⁴⁷ This also pertained to urban encounters: one of the most common cries, used often in some quarrels in public space, was “you don’t know whom you’re speaking to!” (*pan/pani nie wiesz, kto ja*

¹⁴⁴ For Soviet “separation of jollity from public ceremony” see: Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 229.

¹⁴⁵ Gombrowicz, *Ferdydurke*, 233.

¹⁴⁶ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 122.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 198-201.

jestem!) – meaning I am somebody important and you should treat me with due respect, despite the fact that you cannot see it at the first glance.¹⁴⁸

Professionalization of commerce and bureaucratization of urban space, that I will describe in detail in Chapters Seven and Eight, in part aiming at extirpating or at least marginalizing the “excluded economy,” could be held responsible for the drabness of Polish cities. But although that undefined social nature of urban space was precisely the opportunity for intensified struggles over collective consumption. The rugged individualism of the Polish nondescript crowd was well visible already during the first post-war months. This is how the writer Jerzy Kosinski described Łódź of 1946: “life in the city was becoming more difficult. Every day masses of people arrived from all over the country, hoping that it might be easier to make a living in an industrial center than in the country, and that they would be able to earn back all they had lost ... Bewildered people tramped the streets, struggled for seats in streetcars, buses and restaurants. They were nervous, short-tempered, and quarrelsome. It seemed that everyone believed himself chosen by fate merely because he had survived the war, and felt entitled to deference on that account.”¹⁴⁹

Likewise, those who travelled to Poland in the 1960s noted with astonishment that the “countenance of the Polish crowd” was marked by “brutality and disorder.” The socialist crowd was, as one of them marveled, “very individualized. It is enough to hear how they quarrel, see how they are dressed: they are far from conformism. It is enough to see them on the street, in a tram, lining up for cinema tickets, or in stores in order to realize that not a single one of them would miss any opportunity to get a better place, ahead of others.”¹⁵⁰ That consumption stampede was regulated by double moral bookkeeping. Modern *chamstwo* was thus the struggle to participate (and exclude others from participating) in the “collective consumption” of the city. “Only on a bus I understood what the notion of ‘Polish individualism’ entailed,” a pundit remarked.¹⁵¹ And further: “when it starts raining, nobody cares about the line. When a taxi approaches a cabstand, the race begins. First come, first served.”¹⁵² Another one explained: “there is a tensed atmosphere wherever there are some problems. When we fear that we won’t get what we want in a store; or on a bus, when we fear that we might not get in or get out on time.”¹⁵³ As a result, the urban experience became enervating, and the urban realm not a source of “pleasure” but a “territory of only the necessary and

¹⁴⁸ Sceptyk (pseudonym) “Listy na Milicję” [Letters to the police] *Odgłosy* 42 (1962): 1. Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 290-292.

¹⁴⁹ Jerzy Kosinski, *The Painted Bird* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), 244.

¹⁵⁰ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 233.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

unpleasant activities,” dominated by “perpetual struggle, starting from finding a seat on a bus or a tram.”¹⁵⁴

Kinochamy and their lumpenculture

One could fill volumes with such litanies of complaints on unpleasant “urban encounters.”¹⁵⁵ Just as the old “Polish anarchy,” described in Chapter Two, this new urban disorder was firmly structured. A conservative intellectual, who left prison in 1957, was terrified by the changes wrought by the very first post-war decade: “there is an ever deeper chasm between a scanty elite and a crowd that curses, destroys, litters, gets drunk, makes trouble (*chuligania*) and fights.” As a result, “people who are courteous and respectful for others, who speak a human and cultured language (*ludzki kulturalny język*) are nowadays fearful and disgusted when they leave home—not only after dusk and in some dark backstreets—but also in full daylight and in the inner-city.”¹⁵⁶ Quite often, this new urban manners, or rather lack thereof, was explained by the “ruralization of cities.” As Sennett pointed out, silence was a bourgeoisie prerogative, and the upper-class “right to silence” was manifested in both suburban flight to places where the noisy inner-city hubbub did not reach and in their right to “public privacy” – i.e. being out in the public (cafe or pub) but not speaking to others. The quest for silence was also undoubtedly part of the campaign against inner-city musical life and the “courtyard bands,” deemed as overly “peasant-like” or tawdry. Silence, as Sennett pointed out, “made it possible to be both visible to others and isolated from them. Here was the birth of an idea which the modern skyscraper ... brings to a logical conclusion.”¹⁵⁷ To this I will turn in Chapter Eight.

The suburban refuge from enervating urban encounters and “kneading” was merely illusory. This is what some Varsovians, interviewed in 1959-1960, living in the new suburban housing said of their neighbors: just as in the countryside, “one would perish alone without neighbors’ help, here neighbors are good for nothing.” Therefore, “I do not talk to the closest neighbors, these are country bumpkins (*wsiowi ludzie, prymityw*), they are good for nothing;” “I would never invite these primitive *chams* home – they do not know how to behave, and they would only black mouth me after paying a visit.”¹⁵⁸ Gradually, the urban *chamstwo* lost its peasant connotation, and became, as Michnik phased it, “more of a metaphysical rather than a sociological phenomenon.”¹⁵⁹ *Chamstwo* was abstracted from its social context, and no longer denoted somebody from a single social group. As the “individual monads” in the crowd were becoming

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 242.

¹⁵⁵ Helen Liggett, *Urban Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

¹⁵⁶ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 245.

¹⁵⁷ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 217.

¹⁵⁸ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 111.

¹⁵⁹ Adam Michnik, “Chamy i anioły.”

more alike, everybody could be a *cham*, or rather, could reveal to others as one. As class became psychologized, *chamstwo* was now a matter of “involuntary disclosure of character.” Under that urban regime, Sennett argued, “what was perceived when people watched someone behave in public was his intentions, his character, so that the truth of what he said appeared to depend on what kind of person he was.”¹⁶⁰ The cry: “you do not know who I am” could be answered in essentially two ways: one could be either a *cham* or somebody “well-brought up” and “cultured.”

To be sure, the curse of Ham started entering the urban turf already during the interwar period, but it seems that this was restricted mainly to Warsaw. A pundit noted back then in relation to a beating up of a public figure on the street: “in order to emphasize the way I employ the term *cham*, I must admit that I have meet more gentlemen amongst the peasantry, and the largest numbers of *chams* among people for whom good manners ought to be the duty of their birth. The people who, in the middle of the night and under cover, attacked as an armed group a defenseless person – they deserve to be called *chams* and bandits, no matter if they only were dressed up in army uniforms or if they were real military men.”¹⁶¹ Just as before one could infer one’s social standing from attire, now nobody could be certain. What used to be an army officer now could be a masquerader. The urban game of deference and demeanor, and that of “impression management,”¹⁶² was colonized in Poland by the curse of Ham. No longer a racial or ethnic category, now *chamstwo* became an inner predisposition, somehow pent-up, that could be revealed in public urban space. *Chamstwo* was deeply situated in the urban encounter, rather than in somebody’s intrinsic traits – it was an element of the protean urban identity. Even a gentleman, under certain circumstances, could behave like a *cham*. Of course the rule of “moral double bookkeeping” (see Chapter Four) applied here too – because of its competitive character *chamstwo* was always the behavior of others. I have never seen somebody describing him or herself as a *cham*. We can well imagine that those who expected others (the society, the public, the common people etc.) to behave morally, would often commit the crime themselves. When somebody cuts the line – we call him a *cham*. When we do so, then we hope to remain unrecognized. This is how *chamstwo* was intricately linked to the issue of urban collective consumption.

I noted in Chapter Three that *chamstwo* was a disinherited social group. Likewise, in the new urban context, somebody who revealed him or herself to be a *cham* by their inadequate public behavior, showed that he had not been properly “accultured.” One’s place of birth (rural or urban) became increasingly irrelevant. Rather, when exposed to be a *cham* one exposed one’s family background. Diaries of the cohort of the post-war

¹⁶⁰ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 24-25.

¹⁶¹ Wojciech Dąbrowski quoted in: Józef Matuszewski, *Cham* (Łódź: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1991), 174.

¹⁶² Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the City: Inquiries Toward an Urban Anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 232-233.

Polish intelligentsia youth (many of which actually lived initially in Łódź) reveal the anxieties of how to maintain *noblesse oblige* in the new age. “Do not behave like an oaf (*cham*),” or “remember that you’re a child from a good family,” were the common guidelines the youth repeated in their diaries. At the same time, belonging to the superior stratum of “well-brought-up people” (*ludzie dobrze wychowani*) “imposed an obligation; an obligation to treat the common people (*lud*) well but in the first place to educate them and to raise their level of consciousness, patriotic, educational, and hygienic.”¹⁶³ This spiritual duty was extended onto the public urban space soon after the war. As one pundit observed, “the discrepancy between the cultural need of an average worker, who had just abandoned his peasant plot, and the artists who have a highly refined taste is far deeper in Łódź than anywhere else.”¹⁶⁴

Although the street was the main space where a *cham* could be found, just as in Sennett’s analysis, the making (or “discovering”) of *chamstwo* unfolded also in the theaters – or rather in cinemas. Or, to be more precise, in theaters one could show whether one was “well-brought-up” or was an ordinary *cham*. Sennett analyses in great detail how the artistic life of the *ancien régime* was fundamentally democratic in the sense that artists functioned as servants whose tasks was to entertain the audience; the audience was more important than the text. During the Romantic era, the performer rose above both the text and the audience. Before, “a theatergoer had no compunction about talking to a neighbor in the midst of a play, if he or she had just remembered something to say. By 1870, the audience was policing itself. Talking now seemed bad taste and rude.” Restraint of emotion in the public, and mainly in the theater, “became the way for middle-class audiences to mark the line between themselves and the working class.”¹⁶⁵

As it is evident from a famous scene in Reymont’s novel, by 1900 such policing was absent in Łódź theaters; he describes a scene where a major business rumor spreading in the middle of a play induces first energetic chatting and then a major exodus from the building. But Reymont’s novel is written for the Warsaw audience for whom behavior of the *Lodzermenschen* was embarrassingly gauche. Likewise, Łódź hosted Poland’s first cinema, and it was frequented by audiences of all social classes. Yet, the audience was hardly submitted to the text, or Art. Before the antebellum period, films shown in theaters were short – often represented one to two minute long sections of a performance that lasted for an hour or so. Audiences were drawn in not only by motion pictures, but by all sorts of “wonders”: dwarfs and giants, a eight-finger palm in a jar, a stuffed two-headed dog, a “peculiarly obese woman,” athletic performances and the

¹⁶³ Hanna Świda-Zięba quoted in: Gross, *Fear*, 187-188; see also: Hanna Świda-Zięba, *Urwany Lot: Pokolenie Inteligenckiej Młodzieży Powojennej W Świetle Listów I Pamięników Z Lat 1945-1948* (Kraków: Wydaw. Literackie, 2003).

¹⁶⁴ Aleksander Kuc, “O awans złego miasta” [The promotion of the evil city] *Odgłosy* 23 (1959): 6, 7.

¹⁶⁵ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 207.

like.¹⁶⁶ “The delight of the audience was so enormous,” recalled one of the very first cinema owners in Łódź, “that when somebody arrived from outside of Łódź and went to the movie theater, and started complaining about the crowdedness, the public immediately pacified him by saying: it’s our theater of living pictures, and your opinion does not matter a jot – you can either leave or behave properly.”¹⁶⁷ The Łódź crowd behaved in cinema like it did during the 1905 revolution.

During the 1910s cinemas became stratified, and theaters for more high-brow audiences, the so-called picture palaces, appeared. The encroaching centralization of the film industry deprived the Łódź theaters of their previous autonomy (they could not even decide on the repertoire), and the film life was centralized in Warsaw.¹⁶⁸ After the war the very same was to happen with television, as I will discuss in Chapter Eight. Now cinema audiences became tutored how to behave properly (i.e. silently) in the theater. In 1931, Julian Tuwim published a well-known essay called *Kinochamy* – admonishing the “oafs” for reading subtitles aloud in cinemas. “If it is a pair of *chams* of the male gender, then they read the subtitles in turns. If these are two female idiots – then they read in unison ... Often whole families read aloud, each person having their own part. The worst kind of such a beast is the one who not only reads out the subtitles but also who narrates aloud what is going on on the screen.”¹⁶⁹ Tuwim’s text was reprinted after the war – when *kinochamy* became a veritable “plague.”¹⁷⁰ Now, the anti-urban clarion of Maria Dąbrowska (see Chapter Three), where the national culture was regarded as quintessentially rural, and the urban realm home merely to “stinking scum” came back with vengeance. Marian Piechal (1905-1989), Łódź’s very first “proletarian poet,” and a son of a weaver and Tuwim’s protégé, before he moved to Warsaw in the 1960s, became one of the most vehement critics of what he called “lumpenculture” (*lumpkultura*). “National culture,” he insisted, is forged when the “elite culture” derives its inspiration from “folk culture” (but not that of proletarianized serfs, only of the peasant aristocracy). Lumpenculture is hence “the dustbin of national culture: everything that had been cast off as a trivialized, contaminated, rotten, counterfeit, and shallow versions of either folk or elite culture.” This “plague” is spreading fast, Piechal insisted, and the “carriers” are easily identifiable: those who have just migrated from the country to the city. “As they change their material conditions of life, they divest their folk culture, yet they are unprepared (*brak im*

¹⁶⁶ See also: Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

¹⁶⁷ Antoni Krzemiński quoted in: Łukasz Biskupski, “Kinematograf wernakularny. Kino w kulturze popularnej Łodzi przełomu XIX i XX w.,” in *Rekonfiguracje Modernizmu: Nowoczesność I Kultura Popularna*, ed. Tomasz Majewski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2009), 290-330. See also: Malgorzata Hendrykowska, “Film Journeys of the Krzeminski Brothers, 1900-1908,” *Film History* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 206-218.

¹⁶⁸ Biskupski, “Rekonfiguracje Modernizmu.” See also: Sheila Skaff, *The Law of the Looking Glass: Cinema in Poland, 1896-1939* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), chap. 2.

¹⁶⁹ Reprinted as Julian Tuwim, “Kinochamy” [The cinema-chams] *Odgłosy* 36 (1959): 12.

¹⁷⁰ “Chamy w kinie” [The chamstwo in cinemas] *Odgłosy* 3 (1963): 12.

przygotowania) to assimilate to the elite culture. The vacuum thus created is filled in by the lumpenculture.”¹⁷¹

Chamstwo could be observed thus both on the street and in the theater – in fact to this very day the verb *odchamiać się*, literally “to unboor oneself,” is the vernacular way of describing cultural consumption. This is how solemnity and silence were being imposed upon mass audiences after the war too. The attack on the proletarian musical life, and the sacking of *Ciuksza*, has to be understood in that broader context. Musical culture, except for being inherently spatial, was also more democratic than the mass theater where silent audiences subjected themselves to the transcendence of High Art. Amateur musicians played together and the ensembles were a model for a quintessentially egalitarian cultural activity. Now they were to be relegated to the passive audience. Kieślowski’s documentary actually demonstrates what was to replace *Ciuksza* – another scene from a public park shows how a “renown soloist from the Warsaw operetta” teaches the Łódź audience how to sing songs in a performance we call today karaoke. These were songs written and performed by “professionals,” and now could be reproduced by the rank and file – but under strict supervision. Likewise, the workers’ amateur ensembles were encouraged – but not playing tawdry pieces like *Ciuksza*, but something that was part of the “national culture.” The authorities promoted with great alacrity folk dancing ensemble in one of Łódź factories and hailed it as the “flower of the Łódź proletariat.”¹⁷² As I argued in Chapter Five, ruralization of the city was not a “sociological fact,” but an outcome of the efforts of part of authorities. The new *chamstwo* was workers’ inability to adapt to the accelerating jagiellonization (understood as the cultural domination of the post-gentry lifestyle) of the Polish cities. Workers, as Kenney put it, could live in People’s Poland only as ex-workers in the sense that social promotion involved acceptance of the intelligentsia ways of life.¹⁷³ By the same token, culturally workers could live in People’s Poland only as ex-peasants – because this opened them the way for integration into the gentry-dominated “national culture.”

The right attitude

Needless to say, rescaling of identity was not isolated from changes in the workplace. Sennett described in detail the emergence of “protean work” characteristic of modern large bureaucracies, of which the notion of “flexibility” gained the largest purchase all over the world. That word could be found in Poland already in the 1960s. But there is another *emic* notion that captures the rescaling of identity that started during the long

¹⁷¹ Marian Piechal, “Lumpkultura” [Lumpenculture] *Odgłosy* 44 (1960): 7.

¹⁷² The *Harnama* ensemble, Henryk Pawlak, “Sławni i nieznan” [The famous and the unknown] *Odgłosy* 44 (1960): 6; for more on the folk revival in Eastern Europe, see Mary N. Taylor, *The politics of culture: folk critique and transformation of the state in Hungary*. Doctoral Dissertation, 2008, City University of New York.

¹⁷³ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 302.

1960s. The term was “the right attitude” (*postawa*). It has a very curious history in Poland. Elizabeth Dunn, in her ethnography of a privatized firm, observed that what managers expected from the Polish workers was the “right attitude” (*postawa, nastawienie*) towards the change. It included both loyalty to the new employer and willingness to change one’s “mindset,” as well as the ability to emulate certain desired cultural codes. It reached the administrative rungs too, and Polish managers were expected to behave like the capitalist *menedżer* and not a socialist *kierownik* – an “inflexible paper-pushing bureaucrat.” Those who did not know how to display the “right attitude” were first on redundancy lists.¹⁷⁴ This notion, however, was not a post-socialist invention, or a recent import from the West.

We have encountered that term already once in this chapter – the old workers were asked to adapt to technological changes by displaying flexibility and their “right attitude.” Its power is derived precisely from its absolute vagueness. What is the “right attitude” today can become the wrong attitude tomorrow. Authorities can thus steer social change by manipulating the expected “right attitude.” Bridging of the urban archipelago by both rescaling and suburbanization, and hence forging the modern Łódź as a coherent urban unit, and nurturing “new attitudes” (the right ones, needless to say) were two sides of the same process. It was generally argued that the distinction between the working class and the intelligentsia was “dialectically annihilated” in the new suburban houses.¹⁷⁵ Only the most “exemplary” employees, as we shall see in Chapter Seven, would be given apartments in such housing estates. The new Socialist person was, as a result of his/her mobility, “uprooted” from the place of dwelling and birth, and as all (s)he had was their “individual life.” They were increasingly dependent on the institution they worked for, such as work, school or the university. One can single out three main features of the “right attitude”: first, respect for material goods (the opposite of vandalism and hooliganism), and hence the willingness to “get established materially” (most preferably as a family). Second, loyalty to the state (and other state-dominated institutions such as university), the prime organizing force behind “collective consumption,” and not to neighborhood community. Third, it entailed being responsive to fashions, and hence following the latest trends in competitive consumption (more on that in Part Three).

Not incidentally, as I already described in Chapter Five, such rescaling of identity started in Bałuty and not in Widzew. In Bałuty the divorce of the place of residence from the place of work was most advanced in the whole of Łódź (see Plate Nine). But of course not everybody would have the “right attitude” right away. It had to trickle down to the rest who still had “peasant mindsets:” “still seven years ago, there used to be an old Jewish cemetery on the Rybna street,” reported *Odgłosy* in 1959. “Boys and

¹⁷⁴ Dunn, *Privatizing Poland*, 70-79.

¹⁷⁵ Julian Brysz, “Nowe mieszkania – nowe postawy” [New attitudes in the new apartments] *Odgłosy* 47 (1963): 1, 5.

girls squatted there until dusk, or went around and had fun (*szli na koziołki*). They knock at people's doors, asked for glasses, and drank cheap wine (*sikacz*). The elders sat on folding stools in front of the tenement, and talked about everything, including their neighbors' bedroom secrets. It was a veritable backcountry (*najzwyklesza prowincja*).” Now the old ways were no more: “There is a new Rybna street - electrified, with modern stores, and residential high-rise.” Renewal of Rybna triggered a “mixing of milieus.” Both “mature youth” and traditionally-minded (*która pasaża krowy*) lived right next-door. As a result, the two different worlds, the peasant one, and the “twentieth century one” interacted. The “mature youth,” the new vanguard of Socialism, gradually overtook the people wedded to the peasant lifestyle. “Today, youth does not hang out in the empty fields. Their day is organized around going to school, visiting the inner-city, university, and work. They travel to remote districts, have their own individual lives. Thereof the chasm between the islands of the urban archipelago becomes shallower.”¹⁷⁶

Bałuty was the first part of Łódź that was rescaled, and that later on showed the direction to others, although, as we shall see in Chapter Seven, the promotion of the right attitudes did not unfold frictionless. The workers of Widzew (given ever more ideological attention) became the prime object of “urban folklorists” who wanted to write about a “typical working-class family in Łódź.” Gradually, however, they too moved to new housing projects too. Now they had access to electricity, running water, and central heating – amenities unknown to most inhabitants of Łódź in 1945. Yet, to paraphrase E.P. Thompson, they experienced this improvement as a catastrophe.¹⁷⁷ Not because they were “unable to understand the modern challenges.” Rather, the rescaling of their city brought a powerful rescaling of their identity. But it was a political change too. Just as they were able, as in 1905, to organize powerful resistance largely thanks to their urban community, now, expected to show the “right attitude,” they became increasingly dependent on supra-local institutions such as the state. And this, in the long run, as we shall see in the coming chapters, entailed their radical disempowerment, as the place they lived in was becoming increasingly shaped by forces that were wholly beyond their control.

¹⁷⁶ Konrad Frejdlich, “Archipelag nie nazwany.”

¹⁷⁷ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1980), 231.

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PART THREE



Photograph Nine – Łódź's inner-city

PART THREE

One of the leitmotifs of this study is the dialectic between space and place. In Part One I showed how the changing relations between place and space can be understood as the very dynamic of class. I described how the rise of Poland's merchant feudalism and a dual class relation was a consequence of the gentry's superior command over political space, and how the class formation process "fixed" the peasantry in the countryside, and hence turned them into serfs. In Chapter Three I described how the rise of Poland's Manchester was tightly enveloped by the post-feudal class relations that were primarily anchored in space I called Jagiellon. I argued that Łódź as a place can be understood only in the context of its relative location in the Jagiellon space. In Part Two I showed how the collapse of the Jagiellon space, exemplified by the reduced importance of Warsaw as its central node and Poland's capital city, was an opportunity for places like Łódź to slip out from the grip of the extant spatial straightjacket. I also showed how the authorities' reaction to the spontaneous takeover of the urban space by the rural migrants spurred calls for drawing a new line between the *chamstwo* and "their lordliness." In Part Three I will show how such separation was actually achieved spatially.

In Chapter Six I already highlighted the portends of such ensuing "annihilation" of place by space. I described how Łódź was ceasing to be a "smokestack city" and an "urban archipelago" largely ran by "factory chauvinism;" I argued that after 1956 the authorities were gradually remaking Łódź into a coherent urban organism, by increasing the separation between the place of work and the place of residence, breaking away employees allegiance to their direct employers and encouraging allegiance to the state,

and by facilitating investments into city's infrastructure that lay the ground for the possibility of collective consumption. In Chapter Five I argued that the changes in a place like Łódź again have to be understood in a larger context. Urbanization was fully "internalized" in Poland only during the long 1960s. I argued that Łódź did not partake in the all-European "era of reconstruction" (1850-1914) not because of its own "backwardness" but because of the enduring class structures that still held sway in Poland and facilitated uneven developments at the urban scale. I also argued that the post-war "haussmannization" of Łódź was possible because of its changing position in the larger field of power. I described how the century of "centralized industrialization" ended in the early 1960s, and how from that point onwards industrialization and urban growth started moving to second-tier cities. Łódź, in other words, started deindustrializing. By doing so, it found itself in a novel spatial context, and had to reinvent itself.

Just as during its time as Poland's Manchester the urban-rural dichotomy was the most important factor that determined the "meaning" of Łódź as a place, in the wake of the urbanization of the hinterland, that dichotomy was becoming increasingly obsolete. Instead, the meaning of Łódź started being more determined in relation to other largest Polish cities. In other words, Łódź gradually found itself in the orbit of inter-urban competition. The competition was, among other things, for the state-administered means of collective consumption. The sacking of the Ciuksza orchestra, described in Chapter Six, was one of the early signs that Łódź was going to loose with other cities, and mainly with the capital Warsaw, in that competition for resources. Part Three of this study describes the dramatic attempts to compete with other major Polish cities and catch with them. Yet, because that competition was again enveloped in the extant power structures, mainly the Jagiellon spatial heritage exemplified by the central position of Warsaw, Łódź eventually lost. That failure is exemplified by Łódź's vile reputation in the Polish imagination and its position of Poland's Toledo, Ohio (see Introduction).

That process of annihilation of place by space gave birth to what I described in Chapter Six as the rescaling of identity. Denizens of Łódź ceased being "urban villagers" in the sense that their identity was no longer shaped by their first-hand experience of the city. Instead, the "meaning" of Łódź and the "local structure of feeling" altered dramatically. Research shows that still in the early 1950s people native to Łódź felt relatively proud of being a Łodzianin. This pride was mainly derived from their sense of being urbanites as opposed to peasants. As the rural-urban dichotomy declined in significance, the urban identity was increasingly being forged in relation to other large cities. In other words, denizens of Łódź gradually started comparing themselves to the denizens of Warsaw, Kraków or Gdańsk. Because of Łódź's marginalization in the Jagiellon spatial system, and Łódź's inability to keep up in the intra-urban competition, that comparison was becoming increasingly unfavorable to Łódź. While in the 1950s the idea that Łódź was an "evil city" was maybe resonant amongst the narrow circle of the literati, because

of the rise of the culture industry, and neo-Jagiellonization of the Polish culture, mainly achieved through the electronic media (cinema and television), the notion that Łódź was an “evil city” was gradually being inculcated into the larger population. The net result of this was that, as I will discuss in Chapter Nine, Łódź as the evil city became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The period of the “long 1960s” that is key for my analysis is actually substantially underresearched. As Martha Lampland pointed out, the post-1989 historiography tended to mark post-socialism and Stalinism (we can expand it to the entire 1939-1956 period) as moments of rapid social change (albeit differently charged from the moral standpoint: Stalinism was evil, post-socialism was good), while it reified all that was in between as mere “stagnation.”¹ Indeed, after the 1981 meltdown, the dominant representation of socialism in Poland was what of a surreal ersatz state, society and economy – merely a bad imitation of the West that the masses longer for. While, as the reader will see in Part Three, the traumatic experience of World War Two, exemplified by the enduring importance of the “excluded economy,” continued to heavily influence Poland’s affairs, there was a lot of dynamicism and change during the “stagnant” 1960s and 1980s.

The key moment during the long 1960s in both Poland and the West came in 1968. Just as the May 1968 Parisian revolt is remembered as student revolutionary festivity and the birth date of the “right to the city” movement, in Poland during the so-called “March Events” the working class and some intellectuals participated in major anti-Semitic purges, as a consequence of which Jews, both real and purported, were expelled from the country. Just as the Kielce pogrom described in Chapter Four differed substantially from pre-war (largely rural) anti-Semitism, the “March Events” in Poland can only be understood in the context of struggles over collective consumption and intra-urban competition. There was, of course, an important international context of the 1968 purges: the Six Days War between Israel and its Arab neighbors in June 1967. Its most immediate internal consequence in Poland was increasingly tensed atmosphere and the circulation of rumours of the Third World War approaching soon. Initially, however, the popular sympathy in Poland lay with the Israeli side – as the secret services reported, the view that “our Jews beat their [Soviet-supported] Arabs” was really widespread. The authorities managed to sway and cajole large swates of Poles into anti-Semitic rhetoric and condemnations of “imperialism” by playing the card of collective consumption. As I will discuss in Chapter Seven, the “March Events” had an important geographical twist – they were as much directed against the Zionists as against the champagne socialists referred to in Poland as *Warszawka*. One of the key

¹ Martha Lampland, “The advantages of being collectivized: cooperative farm managers in the postsocialist economy,” in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practice in Eurasia*, ed. C. M Hann (London: Routledge, 2002), 33.

targest of attack in Łódź, except for the key institutions such as universities, the army or administration, was the Film School. In 1968 the anti-Zionist workers and youth in Poland were also fighting for their right to the city – only that they stood on the other side of the barricade, so to speak, than the French students.

Part Three will be devoted to the description of the forms of material separation between the elite and the rank-and-file in cities – that the “March Events” were the most spectacular revolt against. I will describe how material structures were used in the making of the distinction between the cultural elite and what Sennett described as “passive audiences.” The cunning of class thus entered a new turf and orchestrated a new “alliance” between class and categorical inequality (see Chapter One). No longer race (as in Poland’s “merchant feudalism”) or ethnicity (as in industrial Łódź) but education and access to cultural goods constituted the new stratifying key factor. The two new communities or development projects that I will describe in Part Three were slated for Łódź’s new elite, distinguished by its “right attitude.” It was the so-called Włada Bytomska (Chapter Seven) and Łódzki Manhattan (Chapter Eight and Nine). But that effort, again, can be seen in two ways. First, internally, as a new spatial reconfiguration of Łódź’s elite, and a novel strategy of material expansion that separated the “haves” from the “have-nots” of the city. But it has to be understood also in its larger context of Łódź’s “relative location” in the larger spaces. The attempt to build a cohesive and self-bound district for “cultural workers” and Łódź’s elite has to be understood against the backdrop of the intensified competition with Warsaw. The building of the Włada Bytomska, and especially of the Łodzki Manhattan, was intended to counterbalance the “brain drain” from Łódź to Warsaw, and to integrate Łódź’s cultural elite. The failure of that projects was exemplified in Łódź’s marginal role during the *Solidarność* carnival and its ensuing marginalization during the entire post-1980 period – that I will describe in Chapter Nine.



Photograph Ten – Workers' housing and an old well in Widzew

Chapter 7

KNIFE IN THE WATER

While electrification proceeded relatively frictionless in Łódź, collective consumption of other aspects of urban life mobilized often deep-seated cleavages, emerging in a new context to boot. These were brilliantly captured in the works of another Łódź Film School alumnus – Roman Polański. Just as his later *Chinatown* (1974) was a compelling portrait of the “water conspiracy” in Los Angeles,¹ his earlier documentaries, and especially his feature debut *Knife in the Water* (1962), despite the fact that it mentions no city and unfolds in the Polish lake district, are deeply anchored in Łódź and especially in its social waterscape.² The story is relatively simple and the plot limited to three characters. Successful and well-to-do journalist and his attractive wife, on their way for a sailing weekend, take a student hitchhiker first to their stylish automobile and later onboard. Continuous rivalry between the two men is the film’s main dynamo. The older man who has already “established himself materially” seems to be in a perpetual need to prove his grit and comes up with countless dares. Eventually his hubris is shattered, as the youngster proves superior in both audacity and cunning. The woman is only modestly impressed, however. Unlike in Gombrowicz, the callow youth is here not to denounce and ridicule the smug maturity; quite the contrary, it is here to shamelessly take its place. “You’re

¹ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 114.

² For more on the politics of water see: Erik Swyngedouw, *Social Power and the Urbanization of Water: Flows of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

just like him only half his age and twice as dumb,” the woman tells the hitchhiker. The two male characters are actually one – only in various moments in life. “You want to be like him,” she tells the youngster. “And don’t you worry - you will, only if you’ve got enough nerve.” She sleeps with him but only because the student reminds her of the old days. When the youngster accuses her of living in comfort and hence knowing little about the realities of life, she retorts: “I haven’t forgotten. Sharing a dorm in six. When you want to sleep, others play bridge. When you want to study, others want to sleep. Canteen food and cheap smokes. Kissing in the gateway: fingers so cold that you can’t unbutton her blouse. Did I leave anything out?” Such was the conversation between those who had already “established themselves materially” and those who dreamed about it in Poland of the 1960s.

The point was that, of course, not every hitchhiker was to own eventually an expensive automobile and a private yacht. *Knife in the Water*, as Maria Kornatowska—one of Poland’s most brilliant film critics—pointed out, “revealed with brutal honesty that we are becoming a nation of philistines, and that there is an increasingly universal agreement that the new social stratification is based upon the distribution of television sets and automobiles.” Polański’s film, she argued, was the very first serious “polemic with the civilization of refrigerators and television sets,” yet it remained an exception rather than the rule in the Polish public life. “Of course,” Kornatowska continued, “the point is not to burn fridges, cars and TV sets at the stakes, but only to restore their adequate function as objects for everyday use (*przedmiot użytkowy*) rather than cultural fetishes of progress, modernity and happiness.”³ As more and more Poles were “getting established materially,” critique was becoming an increasingly daunting task. Most were interested in making their way up rather than denouncing the pathway, and if they did (like the hitchhiker), then only because they either did not make it or thought they would not. Moral double bookkeeping continued to rule supreme. The fruits of the all-national “getting established materially” were to ripen fully in the 1970s, during the decade of “socialist consumerism.” It was in that period, a leading dissident recalled, when “I got scared of Poles for the first time, as they had been largely bought off by the system.”⁴ Therefore before I analyze the origins of the complacent 1970s (in Chapter Eight), I will turn to analyzing how the lineaments of the new order were being both established and contested through the long 1960s, and how this lead to the “effluvia of hatred” erupting in March 1968.

³ Maria Kornatowska, “Antyfelieton” [An anti-collumn] *Odgłosy* 21 (1962): 3.

⁴ Jacek Kuroń, *PRL Dla Początkujących* (Wrocław: Wydaw. Dolnośląskie, 1995), 146-147.

A nation of philistines

Łódź's social waterscape

Poland's Manchester was located in Łódź precisely because its initial glut of torrents and springs that made it the ideal location for manufacture running largely on water power.⁵ Later, when the steam engine took over, water remained to be consumed by the textile industry in gargantuan quantities. Depletion of water resources called for a municipal action, and it was announced already in 1876. Yet, Łódź's "water conspiracy" lobbied to prevent the city from partaking in the all-European "era of reconstruction" and building municipal water and sewage networks. Soon, authorities announced that this was too expensive an undertaking, and renounced the project. In reality, Łódź's industrial elite feared that if water was to be centrally taken in (as in the municipal system), then their private intakes would start running dry. Facilitating uneven development at the local scale also induced them to prevent the sewage network from being built, as keeping Łódź's open sewers (where industrial and household waste mixed) was simply cheaper.⁶ Only during the interwar crisis, Łódź municipality started building the water pipeline system, but only after 1946 did Łódź's population gain a more general access to it (the network expanded from 69 kilometers in 1946 to 478 kilometers in 1968).⁷

The usage of running water in post-war Łódź increased at a brisk pace: from 2.4 square meters per inhabitant in 1946 to 34.5 in 1968. Yet, access to water was highly uneven. By 1966, 63 per cent of Łódź's apartments were connected to the water network (in other major Polish cities this oscillated between 80 and 90 per cent), and only 33 per cent had a separate bathroom (see PlateTen).⁸ Of course all the new suburban housing projects were connected to the system, whereas in the former industrial-cum-residential districts the struggle over water between workers and the industry continued as before. In the district of Chojny, *Odgłosy* reported, many working-class families took "Saturday family baths" (i.e. washed themselves in the very same bathwater, usually in the order of seniority), because water was still purchased (albeit for the "symbolic" amount of 0.02 złoty per bucket).⁹ In Widzew, over 250 old-fashioned wells with wooden cranes (a usual sight in post-war European cities) were still the major source of water in the 1960s. Yet, many (around 12 per cent of Łódź's population) could not

⁵ Jan Fijałek and Ryszard Rosin, eds., *Łódź: Dzieje Miasta [The History of Lodz]* (Warszawa: PWN, 1980), 34-43.

⁶ Henryk Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów: Łódź W Latach 1861-1918* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1978), 139.

⁷ Halina Mortimer-Szymczak, ed., *Łódź: Rozwój Miasta W Polsce Ludowej*, 1st ed. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1970), 107.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁹ Roman Łoboda, "Na Lelewela łódki płyną" [Gutter boats] *Odgłosy* 46 (1961): 1, 6.

access water even in this way, and they were serviced by a municipal water lorries.¹⁰ This is precisely what happened to Zygmunt Józwiak, whom we encountered in the two preceding chapters. He moved from factory-owned housing to his own wooden detached house in Widzew already in the 1930s. Around 1950 “our water disappeared,” he recalled. He drilled a deeper well, but it had water only for a few years. Then a public well was drilled in the vicinity of his house, but it quickly ran dry too. He was not alone in that predicament. In 1969 a journalist reported that lack of water is “number one conversation subject” in Łódź, and that in some places people drill holes on their own accord, which, the police worried, might end tragically.¹¹ In 1984, the year when Józwiak was interviewed, carrying plastic barrels every day to the place where water lorries arrived was the only way he obtained water. It was a bitter retirement for him, as he was one of the builders of Łódź’s municipal water network, both before and after the war.¹²

What Eric Swyngedouw called “urbanization of water” unfolded in Łódź, just as elsewhere, against the backdrop of exclusionary class-based politics.¹³ Dearth of clean water was the hallmark of capitalist Łódź. A much-quoted passage from a poem by Tuwim described “Bałuty’s lymphatic children,” (*bałuckie limfatyczne dzieci*) who have never seen clean water only “rainbow-hued gutter slime” and whose main amusement was sailing paper boats on the open sewers. These “dilapidated yachts frailer than butterflies” sailed down the gutter together with rats, Tuwim recalled, followed by children’s “mature gaze.”¹⁴ A similar image of a bone-dry polluted Łódź landscape was evoked by Reymont too:

In front of the dilapidated houses there ran the remnants of side-walks. These touched the windows where the houses sunk deeper, and the ruts and holes in their interstices were filled up with rubbish. Along the middle of the lanes lay large quagmires, full of mud that was always liquid; and about them poor children used to gather, as wretched-looking and filthy as the vermin which came to life in those ruinous dwellings. Where there was no mud, its place was filled by coal-dust which the cart-wheels scattered about in the air in clouds that hovered over the lanes, begrimed the dwellings, destroyed every speck of verdure on the crooked, sapless trees, whose gnarled, twisted boughs bent over the

¹⁰ Andrzej Jarosławski, “Woda (to nie dotyczy treści)” [All about water] *Odgłosy* 35 (1959): 1, 5.

¹¹ Robert Gluth, “Zamach stanu nad Jasięnią” [Water revolts] *Odgłosy* 24 (1969): 5, 7.

¹² Danuta Halladin, *Łódzki życiorys* [A life in Łódź] (Warsaw: Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych, 1984).

¹³ Swyngedouw, *Social Power and the Urbanization of Water*, 80-101.

¹⁴ Julian Tuwim, *Kwiaty Polskie* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1975), 36-37.

fences or stretched before the houses like dry skeletons.¹⁵

Yet, each of such dry skeletons, a journalist recalled his pre-war childhood, was “guarded with utmost care, because it were the only enclaves of greenery, and even the most mischievous kids in the neighborhood would not dare to pick a leaf from them – they would be punished not only by the janitor or their fathers, but also by any of the neighbors.” There was entry fee to parks – and children often preferred to buy bread instead, and hence were confined to play in the contaminated landscape.¹⁶ After 1945 parks were opened to everybody, and now in the new housing estates everybody had running water. Yet, the problem was hardly solved. Rather, as water consumption in Łódź doubled every five years, by the late 1960s pundits spoke against of a dire dearth of water. Now more and more people living on the highest stories also in the new apartment blocks had to often walk down to their neighbors to fill their kettles in.¹⁷ Further, the overall quality of water deteriorated too. Tea brewed in Łódź, *Odgłosy* noted spitefully, “tasted of modernity – and more specifically of phenol,” as water in the Pilica River (Łódź’s prime water supply since the 1950s) was contaminated by adjacent factories.¹⁸ Only when in 1974 the construction of a dam and an artificial lake in Sulejów was finally completed, Łódź gained new access to fresh water, the water crisis was somehow mitigated,¹⁹ only to return with vengeance in the mid 1980s.²⁰

Water was essential for more than the satisfaction of the most basic human needs. It was consumed not only for drinking or hygiene – but it was also the most desired form of recreation. Perhaps because of the special place of water in the industrial relations of the textile city, the most favored form of leisure for the Łódź working-class was a family picnic next to some water reservoir. Because people could travel either by foot or at best public transport, they could hardly leave the vicinity of Łódź for their Sunday trips. Usage of water for recreational purposes in Łódź was hence highly stratified. Open air swimming pools were mainly frequented by well-to-do youth, sportsmen, actors, journalists and lawyers – *Odgłosy* reported – and the workers mainly swam in

¹⁵ Władysław Stanisław Reymont, *The Promised Land* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1927), 387.

¹⁶ Henryk Polak, “Gramy o zielone” [The greenery games] *Odgłosy* 20 (1973): 5.

¹⁷ Feliks Bąbol, “Bitwa o wielką wodę” [The battle for water] *Odgłosy* 31 (1971): 3.

¹⁸ Henryk Polak, “Gramy o zielone.”

¹⁹ Teresa Wojciechowska, “Dlaczego jest potrzebny wodociąg Sulejów-Łódź” [Why the Sulejów-Łódź water system is essential] *Odgłosy* 33 (1968): 5, Feliks Bąbol, “Co zagraża miastu?” [What’s the biggest danger?] *Odgłosy* 31 (1965): 1, 4, Jan Bąbiński, “Batalia o zalew” [The battle for the reservoir] *Odgłosy* 31 (1974): 1, 11.

²⁰ Eugeniusz Iwanicki, “Kiedy woda na kartki?” [Rationing water?] *Odgłosy* 41 (1986): 1, 5, Roman Kubiak, Gwóźdź do trumny made in Łódź [A nail to the coffin made in Łódź] *Odgłosy* 36 (1986): 1, 6; Roman Kubiak, “Stan kłęski” [A disaster] *Odgłosy* 32 (1985): 1, 6.

the large yet rather overcrowded pond in one of Łódź's parks.²¹ It was in one of Łódź's swimming pools where Polański found the previously unknown actress who played the beautiful wife in *Knife in the Water*.²² The narrow car-owning elite could visit the countryside. But soon yachting became the most fashionable form of leisure. *Odgłosy* wrote a year before Polański's film was released: "until yesterday, the automobile, scooter or motorcycle was the most attention-grabbing gimmick. Nowadays, urban life is tight and stifling. The ring around the city has become overcrowded with tourists too. Where is one to have real rest? The answer is: on the water! Solitude, the chance to get drawn away from the world's nuisances for a few days or even weeks guaranteed! This modern form of leisure is now being promoted all over the world."²³ The moral indignation against the arrogant journalist in Polański's film (as expressed by the hitchhiker) was therefore a protest against a private appropriation of water for leisure.

Automobile fever

The quickness in which a yacht dislodged the automobile from being the most desired "cultural fetish," only reveals the fast pace of "getting established materially." Of course the two were still connected – one could never go for a weekend of sailing without a private automobile, yet owning a car alone was no longer what "impressed others most." We have and we certainly will still encounter this dynamic: once a certain object became more or less available to an increasing proportion of the society, it lost its "fetish" character. This is what eventually happened to the automobile, and this is what happened to apartment blocks (see Chapter Nine). An expert on the garment industry, explained in 1963 that "a society getting established materially" (*społeczeństwo na dorobku*) tends to emulate western lifestyles, and hence the tacit agreement amongst Poles that "what is scarce, expensive or comes from the West becomes fashionable."²⁴ Such a "regime of value,"²⁵ as we have seen in Chapters Two and Three, has been set long before, survived two moments of "material expansion" (feudal and industrial), and now it emerged from the wartime ashes in order to structure the urbanization of class. Although it remained "constant" throughout centuries, it did so only in the abstract (or relational) sense – interwoven into real social fabric, it was fundamentally dynamic.

²¹ Andrzej Makowiecki, "Żabką, czałem i po piesku" [Breaststroke, backstroke and crawl] *Odgłosy* 31 (1965): 3.

²² Jacek Szczerba, "Spieprzaj do Hollywood" [Get the f... out to Hollywood] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (6 October 2009): 12-13.

²³ Wiesław Machejko, "Żeglarze z miasta Łodzi" [Sailors from Łódź] *Odgłosy* 18 (1960): 3.

²⁴ In: Błażej Brzostek, *Za Progiem: Codziennosc W Przestrzeni Publicznej Warszawy Lat 1955-1970* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2007), 279.

²⁵ Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

In other words, as Pierre Bourdieu has insisted, fashions are subject to change – but what remains constant is the class-based monopoly over “taste.”²⁶ Urban collective consumption, like the feudal one, had a fundamentally competitive character. As more and more pundits were announcing that “we cannot expand production indefinitely and we ought to start thinking seriously about regulating the proportion between work and well-earned rest in a just and humane way,”²⁷ increasingly larger swathes of Poles were getting anxious (and Polański’s hitchhiker was their embodiment) if their turn in getting established materially will ever come. Just as the working-class community had been undoubtedly “diluted” by the post-1956 suburbanization,²⁸ and, as I described in Part Two, for that very reason many workers resisted material “improvement” in their living standards, this may have been not as widespread as in the militant Widzew. Still in the early 1950s, workers refused to go on state-funded holidays (they preferred to tend their gardens or visit their rural kin), and defended the integrity of their class for example by reminding the authorities that “a worker does not know how to sit in an easy chair but a bureaucrat does.”²⁹ Rather quickly, however, the spirit of envy eclipsed that of defiance.

The workers were increasingly swayed and cajoled into “amicable co-operation” with the authorities precisely by the rescaling of their identity described in Chapter Six. In the 1970s nobody resisted going for a holiday to the Sulejów area – “the very first enormous and really genuine recreational space with no industrial sites in the vicinity,” accessible to the denizens of Łódź by a highway,³⁰ although still more office workers went for holidays than shopfloor workers, and one-third of the latter spend their holidays at home (see Plate Thirteen).³¹ Likewise, also thanks to inhabitants’ own efforts (who worked on the construction site voluntarily), an old park was substantially rebuilt into a recreational complex 170 hectares large and equipped with waterpark accommodating 4,000 people (even with a machinery producing very popular artificial waves).³² Not incidentally, after it was closed in 1992, the surge of “nostalgia” for the socialist past focused precisely on the old waterpark and the lost accessible on-water

²⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1992), see also: Tony Bennett, ed., *Culture, Class Distinction, Culture, economy and the social* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

²⁷ Włodzimierz Krzemiński (Ćwiek) “Jak nadążyć za konsumpcją?” [How to catch up with consumption?] *Odgłosy* 4 (1968): 10.

²⁸ Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 332.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 324-326.

³⁰ Henryk Polak, “Gramy o zielone.”

³¹ Jolanta Kulpińska, ed., *Włókniarze W Procesie Zmian: Praca Zbiorowa*, Biblioteka Wiedzy o Klasie Robotniczej (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy CRZZ [Centralnej Rady Związków Zawodowych], 1975), 267.

³² Andrzej Makowiecki, “Białe wygrywa, czarne przegrywa” [White wins, black loses] *Odgłosy* 25 (1975): 7; Andrzej Makowiecki, “Zdrowie – wizja przyszłości” [The Zdrowie park – a vision of the future] *Odgłosy* 32 (1972): 1, 3, 8.

leisure in the urban milieu. During the post-2004 wave of reindustrialization and urban renewal, a foreign investor erected Poland's largest waterpark in the place of the socialist one. The symbolic significance of water was enormous – the happy end of the popular 1970s series unfolding in Łódź *Daleko od Szosy* (Away from the Bustle) is played out in poetic swimming pool scene. Characteristically, when the 2009 financial crisis set in and the developer announced the waterpark might be closed down, due to immense pressures from below, the Łódź Council quickly decided to buy all the shares, and today the recreational complex is again entirely publically owned.

The “buying off” of workers into collective consumption begun, however, in the 1950s, mainly through the rescaling of identity. Workers, as I argued in Chapter Six, could make careers in post-war Poland only as former workers, hence by espousing new patterns of consumption – and the institution of the “right attitude.”³³ That Polański's film about Łódź did not even mention the city, and unfolded entirely in a space that can be viewed as its both natural and social negative, was a portend of the changes underway. I described in Chapter Six the beginnings of the process of abstraction from place, and rescaling of social and cultural processes to higher rungs, and thus the gradual annihilation of place in favor of space, or the “production of locality” by external class forces anchored in larger spatial regimes. It was the main outcome of the “scientific and technological revolution,” and the automobile was an integral part of that. As *Odgłosy* applauded, Poland was “burning with automobile fever,” because it gave Poles a wholly new thing: the freedom of movement. “Car owners are the masters of their own movement (*pan własnych poruszeń*)” *Odgłosy* wrote. The Americans “claim that the twentieth century has discovered a new freedom that the human race should strive for (except for the freedom from hunger, fear, penury, war etc.) – the freedom of movement.”³⁴ This is why automobiles became status symbols. “It is hard not to realize,” noted another journalist, “that automobile became one of the most important measures of one's social worth. If there is an automobile owner amongst the new inhabitants of a housing estate (who do not know one another yet), then his neighbors always speculate and come up with wild conjectures that ‘it must be somebody important’ (*to musi być ktoś*).”³⁵ It was precisely in Łódź's very first housing estate for the new elite with the “right attitude” where a postscript to *Knife in the Water* was played out – but this time the man who acted the established journalist in Polański's film was one of the main protagonists as a private individual and a car owner.

³³ Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland*, 302.

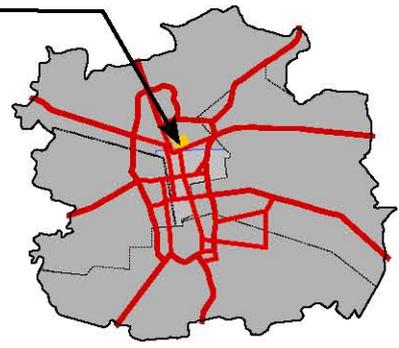
³⁴ Kazimierz Dziewanowski, “Głód nowej wolności” [Hunger for the new freedom] *Odgłosy* 49 (1959): 5.

³⁵ Bogda Madej, “Komu samochód?” [Who wants a car?] *Odgłosy* 14 (1968): 5.

12.1



- New apartment blocks
- Buildings designated for demolition
- Buildings adapted for new purposes



12.3



Sources:
Ginsbert, Łódź,
Google Maps,
photograph by
the author

12.2

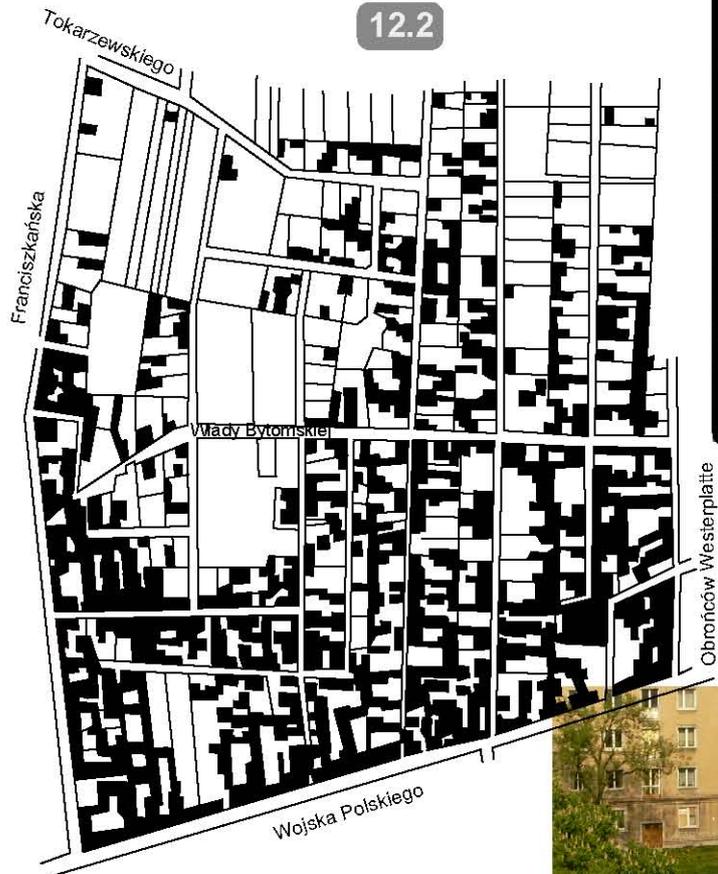


Plate twelve

The planned renewal of Włody Bytomskie (12.1), the same area before 1939 (12.2), and examples of unfinished renewal existing there still today (12.3)

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Proto-gentrification

In literature of the subject, the automobile and suburbanization became nearly synonymous.³⁶ This is so in great part because this literature is largely based on the American experience. In Poland, however, turning of the automobile from a “fetish” into an ordinary object of everyday use took very long: although some pundits argued that this was the case already in the 1970s, this process was fully completed only after 2004, with the incursion of second-hand cars from Western Europe. Suburbanization was thus achieved mainly by the expansion of the public transport – although this was also an uneven process, and many inhabitants even built roads themselves only to give the municipality an incentive to include them on public bus routes. Likewise, what is usually referred to as “gentrification” (high-income residents moving into old neighborhoods trigger revitalization of the old housing stock) is generally contrasted to suburbanization (flight away from the center). Yet, as Neil Smith pointed out in his classic study, “the same forces of urban restructuring that have ushered new landscapes of gentrification to the central city have also transformed the suburbs.”³⁷ Urban process, in general, is highly contradictory. This chapter devoted to suburbanization will be followed by a chapter on remaking of the city center – but the two processes went hand in hand. Łódź was gentrified as well as “automobilized” in earnest only in the 2000s, after a phase of protracted crisis between 1980 and 2003. In this, the last decade brought a maturation of social processes that begun already in the 1950s, and became fully visible during the long 1960s.

The reader will see this clearly when we visit Łódź’s first post-war suburban and proto-gentrified housing estate referred to back then as Włada Bytomska. Although nowadays it does not function as a separate administrative unit, and it even disappeared from Łódź’s maps and vernacular spatial consciousness, all the future urban processes – the interplay of gentrification and suburbanization – can be found there in a nutshell.³⁸ Although Bałuty had been substantially destroyed during the war, by no means was it a “clean slate” on which wholly new housing projects could be erected. Rather, the new apartment blocks were built amongst the ruins and dilapidated capitalist tenements, and in the very heart of the former Litzmannstadt Ghetto. It was, therefore, a “regulation” of the old district that used to be “inhuman in its ugliness,” as a journalist noted,

³⁶ See for example: Kenneth T Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Andres Duany, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000); Mark Baldassare, *Trouble in Paradise: The Suburban Transformation in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

³⁷ Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996), 37.

³⁸ See also: Tadeusz Marszał, ed., *Łódź: Wybrane Zagadnienia Zagospodarowania Przestrzennego* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2006), chap. 1.

destruction of the debris where the post-war hooliganism found a perfect anchor, as well as a gradual inculcation of the “right attitude” into the larger population. Bałuty, a journalist noted in 1974, “had been attacked from all sides.” Residential high-rise and four-storey apartment blocks have been scattered all over the district, so now everywhere there was an “aperture to the outside world” (*przebicie do świata*). There was no place in Bałuty where the new high-rise, literally the point-houses (*punktowce*), could not mark the skyline. The “modern world” was unmistakably visible even from the Bałuty market – formerly the very center of Łódź’s excluded economy, where small-scale vendors (sometimes of stolen goods) mixed with farmers from the north of central Poland offering their fruits and vegetables. In the future, *Odgłosy* declared, the old forms of retail will disappear, and so will the Bałuty market, and in its stead, there would be an eleven-storey high-rise (the Bałuty Market was “modernized” only very recently, as a result of the pressures of the post-2004 spaces of consumption – see Chapter Nine). Not only hens in Bałuty were stressed under such pressure of “modernity” – also people dwelling in the old tenements had no choice but to adapt to the new conditions and now they “renovate their houses, tilt their gardens, paint their walls – they do everything that would help them blending into the landscape of the housing estates.”³⁹

Nowhere was this better visible than in Włada Bytomska – dubbed “anti-Bałuty,” and “the symbol of a great hope.” It was peopled with Łódź’s best stock: all of its 3,700 residents had been carefully selected as exemplary workers and citizens. None moved there from the ruined old tenements (*z rozbiórki*), notorious for their unedifying character, and none had been an alcoholic. Or, to be precise, one of the new inhabitants used to have a drinking problem when working for a private company, but living in the new milieu served as the best therapy: “the ambience of the housing estate cured him.” 40 per cent of inhabitants were classified as working-class, and 60 per cent as members of the intelligentsia. The pre-war class divisions were, however, becoming obsolete here:

The intelligentsia and the proletariat dwelling here are actually of the same ilk. Both are reliable employees, both plan their families responsibly, both are frugal and scrimp and save in order to get established materially. Even their tastes are increasingly alike, only that in one apartment there is a kitschy oleograph, and in other there is a modern folk-styled plate (*cepeliowski talerz*), hanging on the wall above the ubiquitous television set ... Furniture is nearly identical in all the apartments: rather expensive, heavy, with no modern flamboyance.

³⁹ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Na Bałutach wielkie poruszenie” [Great commotion in Bałuty] *Odgłosy* 29 (1974): 4.

There is a dining and a bed room in each apartment. The only exception are the apartments of the artists and other members of the ‘creative intelligentsia’ (inteligencja twórcza) represented in droves here.⁴⁰

This was not entirely true. As sociological surveys confirmed, the working-class preferred to live in apartments with a smaller number of larger rooms, whereas the intelligentsia usually opted for an apartment where each family member had their own room, and hence was usually smaller than in workers’ preferences. Also, as the kitchen was key for the working-class ways of sociability, they did not like that in the new apartments kitchens were tiny, and separated from the living and dining spaces.⁴¹ The new apartments, in other words, were fashioned after intelligentsia’ tastes, and the six to four ratio in Włada Bytomska is a telling “detail” too.

What distinguished Włada Bytomska from other places in Łódź, and made it the ideal location for the new cultural elite, was not only its new amenities, but also its location. It was referred to as a “housing estate with a wide breath,” (*osiedle szerokiego oddechu*), a place one where “industrial odor from Widzew does not reach, and the vivid colors of the plaster are not subdued by the dust from metropolitan thoroughfares. The existing verdure had welcomed the colorful apartment blocks that now surround it.”⁴² It was a suburban paradise – much desired by especially by the “creative intelligentsia,” such as writers, journalists or composers, who often worked at home, and required peace and quiet for their intellectual labors. Although Włada Bytomska was far away from the overcrowded inner-city and its noisy street life, it was right next to a new highway to Warsaw. Hence it became Łódź’s most “representative district” precisely because it could change stereotypes of Varsovians about Łódź. Arriving by car from Warsaw, they would see first this “wide highway, an interesting panorama of the city and the colorful houses.”⁴³ It was a living proof that “Łódź was getting richer” and that it could now “cast off that fetid capitalist cloak of the past” and was becoming a “colorful socialist city.”⁴⁴

Although being located right next to a major highway is today a nuisance rather than a privilege, at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, when there were around 3,800 automobiles in entire Łódź (of which 800 were company-owned and further 900 served as taxis), having direct access to Warsaw was something unusual – especially for the

⁴⁰ Julian Brysz, “Pod rajska jabłonią” [Living in clover] *Odgłosy* 28 (1961): 6, 7.

⁴¹ Andrzej Basista, *Betonowe Dziedzictwo: Architektura W Polsce Czasów Komunisty* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Naukowe PWN. Oddział, 2001), 70.

⁴² Julian Brysz, “Pod rajska jabłonią.”

⁴³ Tadeusz Papier, “Miasto i ulica Liściasta” [The city and the Liściasta street] *Odgłosy* 11 (1960): 8.

⁴⁴ Tadeusz Papier, *Łodzianie 1960. Budowlani* [The constructors of Łódź in 1960] *Odgłosy* 28 (1960): 4; Jerzy Urbankiewicz, “Tak się zaczęło” [That’s how it all begun] *Odgłosy* 3 (1966): 3.

“creative intelligentsia,” who, like people from the film industry, often travelled between Warsaw and Łódź. Inhabitants of Włada Bytomska – except for enjoying purely suburban pleasures of fresh air, little pollution and noise – were closer to two emergent new cultural centers than the rest of Łódź. First, as we shall see presently, the proximity to Warsaw was becoming increasingly important. Second, they lived in the vicinity of the refashioned Old Town District (*Dzielnica Staromiejska*) – a part of Bałuty that was revamped to resemble Krakow and Warsaw’s historic old centers – that a city largely formed in the nineteenth century, and marked by its grid-structure, clearly lacked.⁴⁵ Bałuty used to be “the district of lymphatic children,” but now some of its streets, and especially the Old Town Market (*Rynek Staromiejski*) “resemble pictures from photography albums on Warsaw” – *Odgłosy* advertised Łódź’s new cultural spaces as the ideal site for a romantic stroll.⁴⁶ Young professionals living in the refashioned Bałuty were to become the bellwether of the cultural change. This is how the suburbanization in Łódź was clearly linked with proto-gentrification (rehabilitation not of the housing but of old buildings for cultural consumption) and actual recentralization of urban and cultural space – of which more in Chapter Eight.

Urban pasts and futures

Garages against playgrounds

It may seem paradoxical that the authorities wanted to abolish existing social boundaries by promoting new cleavages. This was precisely why the automobiles were such a vexed issue. On the one hand, their usage was being widely promoted as a tool of abolishing social boundaries. Although its usage had been highly stratified from the very onset, the (relatively) affordable Polish *Syrena* model, it was argued, “gives people power and satisfaction, makes life easier, removes social barriers, and guarantees more free time.” Hence, *Odgłosy* advocated, “for God’s sake, we are materialists, and we should consider nothing that is material alien to us... those who think car owners are snobbish and immoral retain pre-war grudges... now the situation is different – so let’s embrace the automobile!”⁴⁷ The anti-car sentiments were particularly strong in Włada Bytomska, where the inhabitants, as compared to the inner-city (where still most of the intelligentsia lived), were still “getting established materially.” A survey comparing the two populations revealed that Włada Bytomska dwellers were generally younger (between 25 and 39, as compared to 40 to 59 on average), and more satisfied with their

⁴⁵ Especially the part of the Old Town rebuild anew after the war called Mariensztat. See “Łódź i łodzianie” [Łódź and its denizens] *Odgłosy* 4 (1958): 2; Leszek Witczak, “Mała czarna” [A small coffee] *Odgłosy* 18 (1958): 3, 4.

⁴⁶ Tadeusz Martyński, “Randka na Bałutach” [A date in Bałuty] *Odgłosy* 27 (1958): 5.

⁴⁷ Jan Bąbiński, “Mercedesem do Kutna” [Classy cars in Kutno] *Odgłosy* 42 (1963): 1, 6; see also: Karol Jerzy Mórski, *Syrena - samochód Polskiej Rzeczpospolitej Ludowej* (Warszawa: Trio, 2005).

neighbors (“we know that nobody got here by accident”), and earned a little more (854 złoty per one household member as compared to 815). In Włada Bytomska, people owned more television sets, refrigerators, and washing machines but less automobiles and radios. This was precisely the proof for their upstart status: “they haven’t bought their cars and radios yet” because the automobile is a major expense that one needs to save money for, and “the radio is nowadays bought after the television set, and not as it used to be the other way around.” But it was Włada Bytomska that was the trendsetter: a quarter of office workers and 40 per cent of workers living there declared they spend at least three hours daily on leisure – compared only to 5 per cent in the inner-city. This was not, *Odgłosy* argued, a matter of diligence but rather of consciousness: “people shall fully realize they are actually having leisure only once they have the adequate material basis for it – such as a new and comfortable apartment.” This is how the “new attitudes” were being created in the new apartment blocks.⁴⁸

Once the population of Włada Bytomska started buying automobiles, a flurry of discontents erupted. Conflicts focused not so much on automobiles themselves but rather on how they altered the collective use of urban space. Even in 1959, when cars in Łódź were not a common sight, and when the street space was still more dominated by pedestrians than automobiles, the problem of both parking and garage space emerged. There were officially only 800 garages in Łódź – and often car owners had to travel far distances (by public transport) to get to the garage located away from their dwelling. In 1960, the minister of issued a circular letter announcing that the state supports the “healthy civic initiative” of building private garages. *Odgłosy* quickly picked this up, and even printed detailed sketches and cost estimates for those who desired to do so. This was perhaps the reason why a group of four “creative intellectuals” from Włada Bytomska (including Leon Niemczyk who acted the journalist in Polański’s film), wrote a letter to Łódź’s authorities, reprinted in the press. They had been granted a permission to build garages, but later on it was revoked. “We feel we’re being treated like criminals,” they wrote. “Not only are we guilty of buying an automobile – now we are also guilty of demanding some garage space for them.” They explained: “It is enough to have a single neighbor oppose such a construction, and permission is withdrawn automatically,” the men argued. “The social climate is, unfortunately, such that an automobile-owning citizen is a victim of local envy and his every step is carefully watched by the neighbors ... the local, traditional and backward public opinion (*opinia magła i podwórka*) that usurps the mantles of the administration’s has a powerful influence on what kind of decisions are being made. Often authorities surrender to the demagogy that automobiles ‘ruin the air’, ‘make noise’, or ‘pose a threat to children’.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Julian Brysz, “Nowe mieszkania – nowe postawy” [New attitudes in new apartments] *Odgłosy* 47 (1963): 1, 5.

⁴⁹ “List otwarty do Przewodniczącego Prezydium RN m. Łodzi” [An open letter] *Odgłosy* 17 (1961): 12.

Odgłosy recognized their right to garage space and supported wholeheartedly their plea. Initially, it indeed seemed to be a conflict between the old and new inhabitants in Bałuty, divided by their different “attitude” towards modernity and change. Many journalists noted the strained relations between the two groups. Those living in the crumbling tenements “look up to the block residents (*blokowi*): to their material standing, their lifestyle, their peaceful way of life.” The new inhabitants “did not really notice” what they call “the rabble” (*hołota*). “When I’m looking at these two distinct universes,” the journalist Julian Brysz noted, “Then maybe ungrounded but certainly lucid fear comes over – the fear that the affluence of the new inhabitants may usher some enduring forms of separation and egoism.”⁵⁰ It seems that these were the reasons why the “rabble” opposed the building of garages. But they did much more: “early in the morning, they pour dirty water under the windows of the apartment blocks. They cannot dispose of their waste in front of their own houses: there distance between the ground and window sills is less than one meter. If they did, they odor would make them suffocate.”⁵¹ The inhabitants of the new blocks retorted to this: in the morning too they “wait in ambush in their windows, so they can chase away ‘the rabble’ coming there with bucketsful of dishwater. They prohibit their children to visit their friends, who dwell in the dirty hovels.” The “rabble,” on the other hand, longed “for the times, when everybody was equally poor, when nobody called others the rabble, when all children had parents living in similar houses, and when weddings were celebrated by the entire street.”⁵²

Soon, however, it turned out that some of the new inhabitants opposed the building of garages too and they did so for reasons sounder than sheer envy. They argued that garages could take up space that should be designated for children playgrounds. If Niemczyk and others built their garages, they argued in a letter to *Odgłosy*, some hundred children would be deprived of playing space. The four man’s “attitude,” the letter read, was that of “placing automobiles higher over the human being.”⁵³ A venerable institution stood behind their voice: Association for Children Welfare (*Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci, the TPD*), a non-governmental organization formed in 1949 with significant pre-war roots and a moral clout. A journalistic investigation soon revealed the TPD had been very active in organizing extracurricular activities for the children of Bałuty. In many ways, their situation did not change that much since the war. “The air smells of gasoline, rotten cabbage and steppe grass,” *Odgłosy* reported from the new housing projects. Children had still had no playing space, and spend most of their time on the increasingly dangerous street and played next to barrels with

⁵⁰ Julian Brysz, “Pod rajska jabłonią.”

⁵¹ Zbigniew Kwiatkowski, *Gdzie padają kule*, 47.

⁵² Kwiatkowski, *Gdzie padają kule*, 49.

⁵³ “Listy do redakcji” [Letters to the editors] *Odgłosy* 21 (1961): 12.

decomposing rubbish. Some inhabitants belittled the problem by retorting “I used to sail paper boats on the gutter and I’m still alive,”⁵⁴ but many decided to act upon it. For example Certain Ms Wyrębska, a pensioner with dedication for voluntary work, organized a TPD-based club in one of Bałuty’s new housing estates. She collected small contribution from parents, and bought a volley ball and a net. She also received a swing, a slide and a few other outdoor toys from the TPD. Together with some children, they built benches from wooden planks. After two years of activity, the club had a chessboard and a number of other board games, building blocks a small pool table and even a film projector. In wintertime, Wyrębska organized screenings for children in her private apartment. There were a number of similar initiatives all over Bałuty.⁵⁵

Similar conflicts over the use of space rose in other corners in Łódź. They were not merely quarrels over the right to the city – it were two conflicting visions of urban life and urban futures that clashed here. Those who wanted to use the space between apartment blocks into their own garages, favored privatization of space, and “splendid isolation” from the rest of the community. “One of the central tenets of working-class livelihoods in antebellum Łódź,” as an anthropologist recently noted, “was something that runs contradictory to our contemporary understanding of urban life – that is a significant lack of privacy.”⁵⁶ I described the working-class neighborhood sociability in greater detail in Part Two. People like Ms Wyrębska embraced precisely such a vision of urban life that was public and open. Social atomization was the most burning problem of the post-war cities – she argued. “Our spontaneous work with children,” she told *Odgłosy*, “brings neighbors together. Here, where we have built this playground, neighbors do know one another, know their joys and sorrows, they are interested in each others’ affairs. But they got to know one another precisely on the playground, and friendships have been built on the basis of that space.”⁵⁷ Wyrębska believed in the common weal; her tacit assumption was that the lot of the “lymphatic children” was a public and not a private matter. Her vision for the urban future was deeply anchored in the capitalist experience of Łódź. For her the name of Włada Bytomska had a deeper meaning. The new housing estate was named after a Communist activist, whose charred body was found in 1938 (the police declared it was self-immolation, the Communists suspected it was political murder),⁵⁸ not far from where the new “colorful” apartments were erected after the war. Already the 1905 revolution “sparked an unprecedented popular awareness of and interest in education, a

⁵⁴ Karol Badziak, “Czerwone bloki” [The red apartment blocks] *Odgłosy* 23 (1959): 1, 3.

⁵⁵ Bogdan Moliński, “Dzieci, podwórka, dorośli” [Kids, playgrounds, grownups] *Odgłosy* 20 (1961): 1, 2.

⁵⁶ Bronisława Koczyńska-Jaworska, *Łódź i Inne Miasta [Łódź and Other Cities]* (Łódź: Katedra Etnologii Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1999), 79.

⁵⁷ Bogdan Moliński, “Dzieci, podwórka, dorośli.”

⁵⁸ Waclaw Pawlak, *W Rytmie Fabrycznych Syren: Łódź Między Wojnami* (Łódź: Wydaw. Łódzkie, 1984), 232.

consciousness made manifest by workers living in the slum district of Bałuty in Łódź, when in mid-1906 they decided to tax themselves in order to create five new elementary schools.”⁵⁹ Not accidentally, during its moment of “municipal socialism” just after the World War One, Łódź’s administration was the very first in Poland to introduce free and public education for children. In 1918, Łódź spent a quarter of its budget on welfare for children – more than any other Polish cities at the time, and five times more than before the war.⁶⁰ Caring for the Łódź children, and especially in Bałuty, was synonymous with struggling for a better urban future where the typical capitalist ills were alleviated. But that future and that past was soon to disappear.

Class, family and meat

The automobile-based urban future, where the society comprised loyal citizens and state employees, identified by their “right attitude,” uprooted from their community of residence and self-identifying with their place of work, living a “quiet” suburban life, had gradually gained the upper hand. The pro-family campaign, where urban collective consumption was increasingly becoming suburban and hence family-based, turned the family into the critical unit of class reproduction. People like Ms Wyrębska, for whom the fate of children was a public and common affair, were becoming old-timers. I have already mentioned how the new built environment was actually promoting intelligentsia lifestyle – it was also promoting an intelligentsia-fashioned family life. By the mid 1970s, the population density equaled in Łódź other major cities, and dropped from the pre-war two and a half people per chamber to one person per chamber; likewise, the number of apartments with single rooms dropped from over 60 per cent to a quarter (see Plate Ten). Now everybody had their own room in Łódź.⁶¹ Although initially, as I discussed in Chapter Five, the promoted family ideal was “two plus two” in the 1970s, pundits already noted that the “two plus one” model was becoming increasingly widespread. The explanation for this was straightforward: in a society where everybody earned more or less the same (the salary of a skilled worker did not differ much from that of a university professor), two new factors were critical for status differentiation. The first one were additional incomes, and hence the persisting significance of the “excluded economy.” The second factor was the number of household members. Consumption budgets per head were significantly higher in families with two parents but a single child than in the “two plus two” families. Since up to 70 per cent of family budgets were spend on food, there was a very clear class division in family consumption patterns: single-child families consumed more meat, milk, cream, butter,

⁵⁹ Robert Blobaum, *Rewolucja: Russian Poland, 1904-1907* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 187.

⁶⁰ Dinter, *Spod Czarnych Dymów*, 456-258.

⁶¹ Mortimer-Szymczak, *Łódź*, 51.

13.1

Monthly budgets of the poorest and the richest families with parents employed in industry in 1958

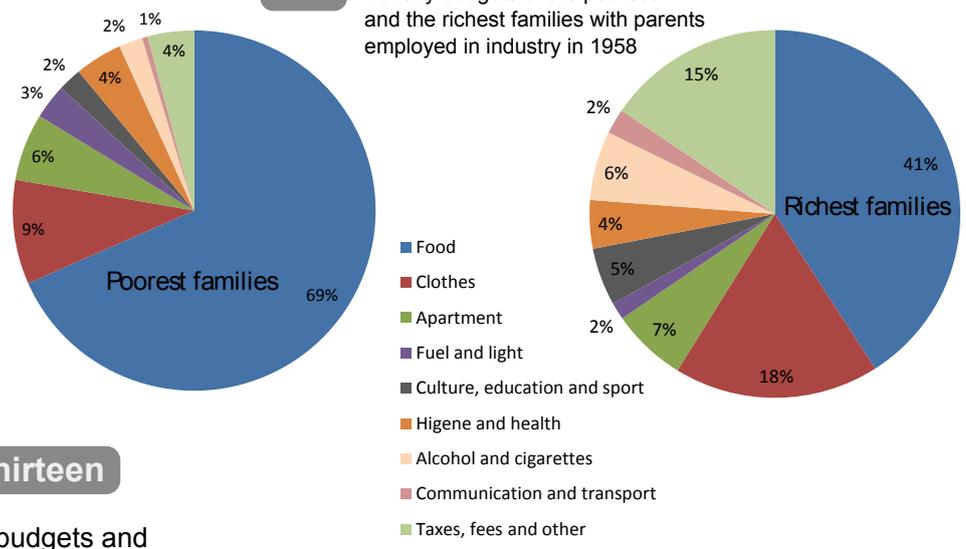
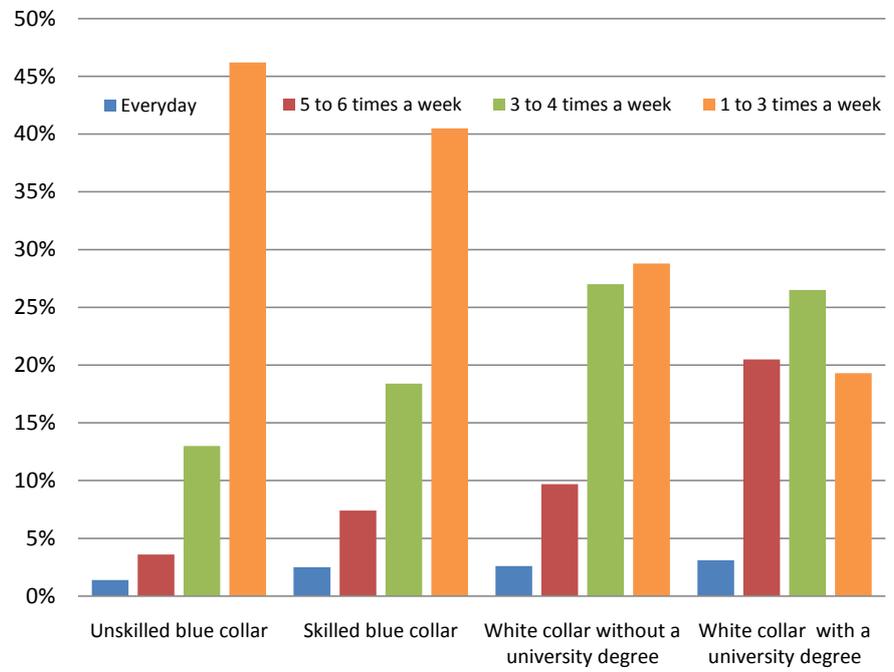


Plate thirteen

Family budgets and polarization in consumption patterns

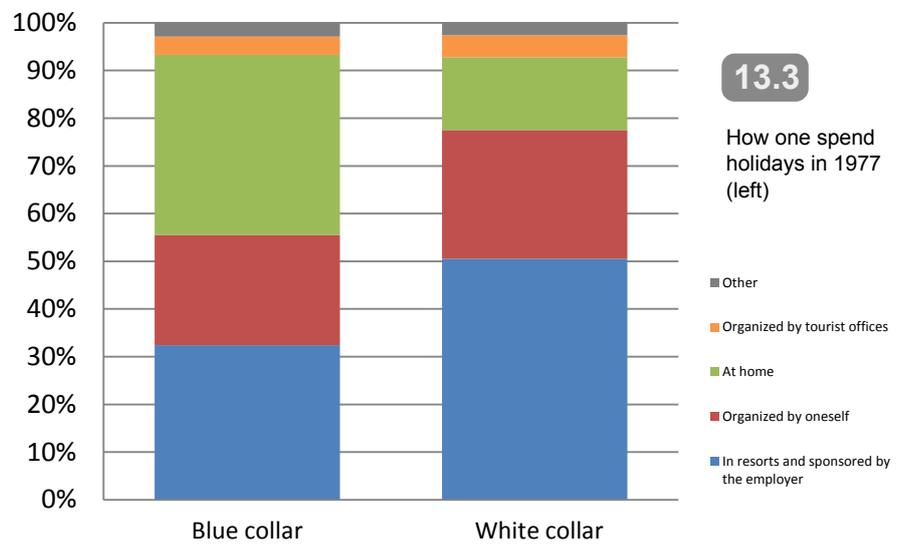
13.2

Meat consumption in 1960 how often one had meat for the main meal (below)



13.3

How one spend holidays in 1977 (left)



Source: Rosset Łódź 1945 do 1960, p. 496, Jarosz Afera mięsna, p. 161, Kulpińska, Włókniarze w procesie zmian, p. 267

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white rolls, jam wheat flour, and much less cheap sausages, bacon, rye bread, lard, potatoes and sour cabbage.⁶²

Hence, the continuous salience of meat (30 per cent of food budgets were usually spend it) in the struggles over collective consumption. It had become the most “politically charged” item in Poland. Because of rising meat prices in 1970/1 and 1976 major working-class upheavals broke out, and meat remained an important bone of contention for the *Solidarność* movement too. As a result of the working-class pressures, *Solidarność* movement introduced the rationing of meat, which was intended to put an end to what was considered its unfair distribution. Precisely in order to raise that point, the women of Łódź organized a “hunger March” in the summer of 1981.⁶³ Although very often such a central place of meat consumption in both Polish politics and economy was regarded as a sign of the “ruralization” of the city, this was only partially so. Everyday consumption of meat, and especially of pork, was a quintessentially urban phenomenon. Peasants in the nineteenth century consumed up to 6 kilograms of meat annually – and a vast bulk of it during the Easter celebrations. It was peas and parsnip, rather than meat, which served as their symbols of plenty. Further, consumption was not an individual but a collective affair: families usually eat from a single bowl. For that reason everybody was required to eat slowly – and when there was more food available, then peasant families tended to increase the number of meals a day, rather than ate bigger portions.⁶⁴ Peasant food consumption, in other words, was relatively egalitarian.⁶⁵

In the city, on the other hand, it was increasingly stratified. Already during the antebellum period meat consumption became a symbol of high status, and these pre-war hopes were gradually being fulfilled after 1956. By 1968, average annual meat consumption, in both city and the country, was 52 kilograms – which was double the pre-war level (but half of the American level).⁶⁶ As it is evident from Plate Thirteen white collar workers consumed meat on a daily basis, while for blue collar workers it was largely a Sunday event. The shifting of the major consumptive event of the year—from Easter to Christmas—was also a portent of its urbanization, and adjustment to foreign (Western) fashions. Most complaints about ill-functioning of meat stores came

⁶² Krzysztof Podgorzelec, “Świat w którym żyjemy” [The world we’re living in] *Odgłosy* 37 (1960): 6.

⁶³ Jacek Kurczewski, *The Resurrection of Rights in Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 310-311, Dariusz Jarosz, *Afera Mięsna: Fakty I Konteksty* (Toruń: Centrum Edukacji Europejskiej, 2004), 204-216, 226-237.

⁶⁴ Bohdan Baranowski, *Życie Codzienne Wsi Między Wartą a Pilicą W XIX Wieku* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1969), 49-54.

⁶⁵ For more on food and class see: Jack Goody, *Food and Love: A Cultural History of East and West* (London: Verso, 1998).

⁶⁶ Jarosz, *Afera Mięsna*, 152, 155.

from largest cities rather than the countryside.⁶⁷ Complaining about the inability of the Polish state to satisfy the raising demand for meat became nearly ritual in the mass media – yet, as both surveys and reportage confirmed, Polish workers generally preferred to eat at home – because mothers did not want to relinquish control over this increasingly important domain. “I’m not so poor as to wonder about canteens,” one female worker told *Odgłosy*, and another one added: “I would not dare to board my husband or children with the state (*na państwowy wikt posyłać*) because what will they eat there? When I prepare myself a lordly pot of soup (*dworski garnek zupy*), then I am certain that they will all have more than enough.”⁶⁸ Typically, mainly white collar and single workers ate at work. The larger the family, the more likely it was for Łódź textile workers to eat at home.⁶⁹

The key position of meat for urban consumption was not only the result of the proliferation of the “human motor” model, wherein the body-machine had to be fuelled properly in order to work. Two social groups were particularly “entitled” to meat: those performing the most demanding physical labor (such as miners) and children.⁷⁰ The latter shows the increasingly important role of the family in the accumulation process. This is, to be sure, nothing new – rather, family regimes were fundamental for internalization of production in Britain. As Wally Seccombe argued in an impressive study on the relationship between the emergence of capitalism and the North-West European family model, the capitalistic “mode of production facilitate[d] the reproduction of certain [nuclear] family forms while inhabiting or precluding the development of others,” mainly the “Eastern” extended family model. “Family forms shape the development of modes of production, in the first place because they are central in the production of people and their capacities for work.”⁷¹ Indeed reproduction of the working-classes through family regimes remained crucial for the production process, and increasingly so for high-value added production. There is an intimate link between labor stability, skill and the quality of production. While West European industrialists sought to stabilize its working-class during the “era of reconstruction,” industrialists in Łódź built factory housing only for its most skilled workers that they wanted to keep. Hence only when Łódź sought to jump over its shadow of Poland’s Manchester, family regimes, as I showed already in Chapter Five, were increasingly important. But this is only a part of the story.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁶⁸ Julian Brysz, “Stołówka kontra garnek dworski” [Canteenes contra lordly pots] *Odgłosy* 30 (1966): 1, 5.

⁶⁹ Kulpińska, *Włókniarze W Procesie Zmian*, 273.

⁷⁰ Kurczewski, *The Resurrection of Rights in Poland*, 343-345.

⁷¹ Wally Seccombe, *A Millennium of Family Change: Feudalism to Capitalism in Northwestern Europe* (London: Verso, 1992), 233. See also: Goody, *Food and Love*, and Göran Therborn, *Between Sex and Power: Family in the World, 1900-2000*, (London: Routledge, 2004).

The flower lady story

In Chapters Two and Three I showed that the family origins of capitalism in Poland do not lay in the emergence of some family model, but rather in the schism between two family models – that of the gentry and that of the peasantry. The serf family became a production unit, while the gentry family became a consumption unit. Both had to be reproduced, and the former was reproduced thanks to the subsistence plots and the latter thanks to its class-based consumption patterns, including cultural consumption (education). The real difference was that while peasant family could only produce (for the gentry) and reproduce itself, the *szlachta* also accumulated. The curse of Ham worked precisely in favor of separating the reproducing and the accumulating families – *chamstwo*, as we remember, was the group deprived of the right of inheritance (and a surname). Because now the state was the major employer, and it was in the interest of the state to treat workers as individuals rather than families, family in post-war Poland was more of an consumption-based rather than production-based unit of accumulation. In Chapter Six I argued that *chamstwo* in the urban realm was a disclosure of both one's behavior and the kind of family one belonged to. Clothing, as it is evident from the comparison of well-to-do and poor family budgets (see Plate Thirteen) was another distinctive trait, and I will return to this in Chapter Eight. The competitive pressure was really enormous: the popular series *Away from the Bustle* is actually a story of a *mésalliance* between a single child of an educated Łódź family and a boy with a rural background. The girl's parents insist that “an intelligent person chooses a partner who is adequate to their aspirations and do not lower themselves to...”, and the entire series is a story of the couple trying to nurture their love against the grain of social expectations. But the lines of division ran also within single families, as the story of a street flower vendor, written down by Ewa Ostrowska in 1963, clearly demonstrates.

The old flower lady, whom the journalist meet on one of Łódź's streets, was a widow; her entire postwar life was devoted to making the process of “getting established materially” possible for her only son, of whom she spoke in a double diminutive – Staszeczek. “Finally, I got this piece of veal for him!” she told Ostrowska. “Good Lord, how he loves eating veal – fried with onions, in breadcrumbs and eggs, so it gets so golden crispy! When he was studying for the baccalaureate exams I took particular care of his diet – he had to eat well, so I tried to get all the dainties possible for him.” She used to be a textile worker, but soon suffered from bad health, and went on state benefit (*renta*). In order to get extra money, she did garment alterations or even sew clothes at home. Because she worked at night, and they lived in a single-room apartment, he kept complaining that he could not sleep because of the light. So she covered the lamp with paper, and worked in the dim light. As a result, her sight deteriorated quickly, and she went to hospital, where one of her eyes was removed. Because falling ill used to be a privilege of the upper classes, she recalled the hospital stay as the best time in her life: “Never before and never did I lay in bed so much! (*wyleżałam się za wszelkie czasy*).

Strangers came up to me – the only time in my life when somebody alien took care of me. And Mr. doctor came to me too—a man of letters, a man from a different world—and said ‘good morning’ to somebody like me. The nurse brought me lunches – God, I would have never believed that I one day I’d be eating lunches in bed.” Her son, however, never visited her in the hospital. It saddened her, but mainly because she was saving sweets people were bringing her, and wanted to give them to Staszeczek.

What is most disturbing in this account is the absolute lack of reciprocity between the mother and the son. After completing an engineering degree, Staszeczek worked in an office, but still lived with his mother. She never, however, had the chance to “see his life.” He never had visitors (“I do not want people to see this hovel. It’d only put me to shame”), and also he demanded that her friends do not come over because he did not wish to be disturbed by the “rabble” (*tatalajstwo*). In fact, she “saw a bit of his world” once when they meet on the street. She saw him walking, in high spirits and elegant (she washed and ironed his clothes), talking cheerfully to a friend. When she called him, Staszeczek pretended he does not know his mother, and kept strutting. Of course she was giving him all her money, and now he told her that she should start selling flowers in order to raise money for her funeral. It is for the better, she told the journalist, that Staszeczek “will have his own apartment, wife and children after my death. He would not have allowed me to see them anyway. His world is different—that is a fact of life. I slurp tea, it is a habit of mine. Staszeczek has his in an elegant manner. So all this is nobody’s fault.”⁷²

Although this story is certainly not “typical” it may not be exaggerated. Lack of inter-generational reciprocity is a old story in Poland – the plight of the elderly (the so-called *wycugi*) was the leitmotif of Reymont’s *The Peasants*, for example.⁷³ A young hospital intern from Łódź reported with despair that they get many cases of emaciated elderly, who are “nearly starved to death at homes.”⁷⁴ Children of vendors at the Bałuty market, or workers who lived in the inner-city tenements, maintained increasingly weak relations with their parents. One of the latter said: “My daughter had moved out to Piotrkowska,” – and the journalist explained: “That means: she moved out to the distant, better world. She has a managerial job at some office, but my interviewee does not know where exactly. She knows very little about her son too. I ask if children pay them visits. - When kids get married, they reply, then there’re good for nothing.”⁷⁵ The act of getting established materially by embracing the new urban lifestyle, rescaled

⁷² Ewa Ostrowska, Sprzedająca kwiaty [The flower lady] *Odgłosy* 22 (1963): 1, 4.

⁷³ Ostrowska’s flowerlady is remarkably similar, in her way of speaking and her attitude towards her miserable lot, to Agata from Reymont’s novel, see: Władysław Stanisław Reymont, *The Peasants* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1924), 1.

⁷⁴ Feliks Bąbol, “Dzień młodego lekarza” [A day of an intern] *Odgłosy* 14 (1963): 1, 5.

⁷⁵ Julian Brysz, “Na skraju królestwa” [At the kingdom’s edge] *Odgłosy* 48-49 (1963): 6.

identity and “the right attitude,” as well as the increasingly dominant urban future of “isolation and egoism,” was therefore based upon a powerful act of collective forgetting. Sometimes, as in the case of Staszeczek, this forgetting was so deliberate and persistent that it only showed the enormous class pressures exerted on the patterns of urban consumption.

Whose right to the city?

Breaking up the dance

Before his feature debut, Polański shot a number of short films and documentaries even more firmly anchored in Łódź. In one of them, like Kieślowski, he showed how music and spatial transformations were intertwined. *Break up the Dance* (1957) nearly earned him expulsion from the Film School. Polański offered his colleagues to film one of their dancing parties. What he did not mention was that he had also invited a group of Łódź's inner-city thugs to crash the party. He knew them well, as film students frequented inner-city clubs, and danced with the proletarian youth, or – to be more precise – girls. The opposite, however, was rather uncommon: the juvenile working class would never be invited to parties thrown by Poland's most celebrated youth. When Polański made this happen, the fighting was so ferocious that the camera was broken, and significant parts of the film had to be reenacted.⁷⁶ A year before that, during the 1956 commotion, the Łódź youth was in the forefront of the “Polish thaw” and destalinization. Film School students renounced their Association of Polish Youth membership cards, and demanded a more democratic organization to be formed.

“Revolutionary groups” mushroomed at Łódź's institutions of higher education. During a massive rally in Łódź's “revolutionary forge,” the Widzew Manufactory, Polański, representing the Film School students, spoke passionately from a boxing ring to a crowd of a dozen thousands of students and young workers. A petition with eleven postulates was brought to the Central Party Committee in Warsaw and discussed. In January 1957 new youth organization was founded. The notion, put forward by some students, that their organization should be independent from that of young workers, was rejected out of hand.⁷⁷ Ironically, Polański achieved in his documentary what the Communists failed at in 1956 – to “differentiate” youth from “good” and “bad” families, and have them stand out against each other. Although street fighting between

⁷⁶ Andrzej Makowiecki, *Rapier Napoleona* (Łódź: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1986), Roman Polański, *Rozbijemy zabawę* [Break up the dance] (Łódź: PWSF, 1957), see also Roman Polanski, *Roman by Polanski* (Ballantine Books 1985).

⁷⁷ Leszek Próchniak and Janusz Wróbel, eds., *Łódź W Latach 1956-1957* (Łódź: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2006), 60-62, 110, 186; Karol Głogowski, “Szczelina Demokracji,” [A democratic lacuna, an interview by Gustaw Romanowski], *Tygiel Kultury* 10/11 (1996): 20-23.

students and “hooligans” was not rare in the late 1950s,⁷⁸ a physical confrontation between intelligentsia and working-class youth erupted only during the anti-Semitic and anti-student events of March 1968.

What had changed in that period separating 1956 and 1968? Although the commotions of 1968 were partially instigated “from above,” just as before, the mass response to the national “media campaign” showed that the party-led campaign gave vent to a number of accumulating social grievances. In March 1968, two fractions of the Party, known colloquially as the *chamy* (oafs) and the *żydy* (the Jews) clashed; just as the former cabal remained in opposition for nearly the entire post-war period, in 1968 it enjoyed its first triumph. Differences between “March 1968” and the Kielce pogrom show how much the meaning of “anti-Semitism” changed during the two first post-war decades. Just as the former has been codified in historiography as unfolding in space – or more specifically in a place, to wit, in Kielce, the latter is remembered temporarily – as the “March events” (*wydarzenia marcowe*). During the immediate post-war period, getting established materially entailed rather random acts of appropriation of “ex-Jewish” or “ex-German” property, as during these three tragic days in Kielce. The “March events” were a nation-wide and country-wide state capture. It was not looting but purging state apparatus that was its main dynamo. The “effluvia of hatred” erupted in all of Poland’s major cities, and especially at key institutions – such as the army, universities, the industry. The fast pace in which events unfolded, as well as their enormous scope, contributed to the sense of a certain placelessness of the “March events.” Just as the strikes of 1945-1947, or the upheaval in 1956, were rather “place-bound,” because now taking over the entire state apparatus (via purging the party of unwanted members) was at stake, “the March events” indeed unfolded more in space rather than in a place.

Further, what was new about it was also close involvement of the mass media in “press campaign,” which made the coordination of events (such as “anti-Zionist” rallies) in distant places possible. Another key difference to the Kielce pogrom was that now the violence (nobody was murdered but many suffered from physical injuries, and many more were expelled from the country) was directed not so much against the Jews as against the Zionists.⁷⁹ This subtle difference was of key importance. A Zionist did not necessarily have to be a Jew – rather it was somebody who “chose a different homeland” (Israel) and whose loyalty to the Polish state (and the Polish people – as Poland’s was a People’s Republic) was under doubt.⁸⁰ In other words, the institution of

⁷⁸ Marek Regel, Konrad Frejdlich, “W chandrze Bystrzyckiej” [Boredom in student dorms] *Odgłosy* 19 (1958): 1, 4, 5.

⁷⁹ Dariusz Stola, “Fighting against the Shadows: The Anti-Zionist Campaign of 1968,” in *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, ed. Robert Blobaum, 2005, 284-300.

⁸⁰ Jerzy Eisler, *Marzec 1968: Geneza, Przebieg, Konsekwencje* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1991), 42, 116-126.

the “right attitude” was put to a novel use. The “effluvia of hatred” erupted during sessions held at all important state institutions where party members’ “attitude” was publically assessed. Now loyalty to the Polish state and people, party-mindedness (*ideowość*), and “impunity to the Zionist propaganda” were the hallmarks of the “right attitude,” whereas cosmopolitanism, allegiance to agencies beyond the Polish state and the pursuit of self-interest were the hallmarks of the “wrong attitude.” Those who had the wrong attitude were actually denoted as “carriers” (*nosiciel*) – such as “carriers of Zionism,” – just as the right attitude could trickle down from the exemplary workers onto their neighbors, the protean wrong attitude was likewise contagious.⁸¹

The “March events” had been actually rehearsed in *Knife in the Water* – just as in the film the marginalized hitchhiker only humiliated the arrogant journalist, now he managed to successfully take over the desired privileged position. The key enemy of the campaign was what could be dubbed as “crony socialism” – a system where social mobility was not based upon the recognition of people’s personal merits, or one’s hard labor, but where the “social stratification based upon the distribution of goods” was wholly arbitrary, and increasingly monopolized by a tightly-knit “clique.” Zygmunt Bauman, only few months after he had been expelled from Poland, explained the “March events” thus:

following the post-war revolutionary transformations, the ladder in most of the Polish administration, in the army and amongst the middle rungs of the party apparatus had become overly flat. The problem of professional advancement – the most acute of all problems of any bureaucracy – was not solved by the automatic mechanism of seniority (*wysługa lat*). In the old days, this problem was thus resolved either by mass purges or by artificial multiplication of state jobs (*rozdmuchiwanie etatów*). For the past twelve years, none of these methods were in use. It was long enough for increasingly larger swathes of the ambitious and the frustrated to coalesce together.⁸²

Ironically, the target of the attacks were also the “middle class,” or, as a pundit dubbed it in 1967, the “neobourgeoisie” (*neomieszczanstwo*). A neo-bourgeois “pursues exclusively his own interest, at the expense of others and the common weal. All his efforts are directed at achieving and then maintaining the most comfortable lifestyle; regardless of moral, social and even legal means necessary... the organizational form of the neo-bourgeoisie is the clique, coterie, and the Society for Mutual Adoration

⁸¹ Zdzisław Zblewski, *Leksykon PRL-U*, 1st ed. (Kraków: Znak, 2001).

⁸² Quoted in: Eisler, *Marzec 1968*, 54-55.

(*towarzystwo wzajemnej adoracji*).”⁸³ The battle that unfolded in 1968 was, therefore, part of the longer conflict I have already described – it was a struggle to redefine the borders of what was regarded as legitimate and illegitimate social mobility. Precisely for that reason, we should be wary of the high moral overtone of such a critique – it is nothing else but “moral double bookkeeping.” Although in hindsight the March Events have become remembered as highly immoral, the 1968 critique of Zionism, and the arguments such as: “only a Polish patriot can be a true Communist, and every true Communist is a Polish patriot,”⁸⁴ were girded in a highly moralistic clarion. Of course that moralizing served to a rather murky end: the prosecution and expulsion of some 20,000 people.⁸⁵ Yet, as I will describe below, the March Events were a rebellion against the neo-jagiellonization of Poland and its cultural space, and against the crony champagne socialists who were, in the eyes of many, increasingly isolated in the ivory tower of the capital city, Warsaw. It was a rebellion of those who wanted to get established materially against those who already had, and against the increasingly unclear rules of the game. The “placeless” March Events unfolded in space. Precisely for that reason its rhetoric harked back to the Piast ideology, although now not anti-German but anti-Semitic sentiments were the kernel of the Polish “national communism.”

Hidden injuries of class

The neo-bourgeoisie had been criticized long before the March events. During a party plenum of 1963, for example, a stinging critique of “lack of party-mindedness” (*brak ideowości*) unfolded. Zbigniew Nienacki, the author of best-selling adventure novels, described in his commentary how good manners have replaced idealism and party-mindedness. “In some circles,” he argued, “it is enough to be genteel, well-dressed, always have money and a car, to be knowledgeable about cognacs, to travel abroad. People’s morals or their social and political views ceased to matter.” He blamed it on the increasingly close contacts with the West. “Few years ago, our simplistic propaganda led people believe that the West is plagued by penury and starvation. Then many started visiting the West, and now a new view – that each worker in the West owns an automobile and a five-room apartment, became widespread.” This is how, in his view, “bourgeoisie ideals” have returned to Poland – and its main propagators were the “coffee house prophets.” They embraced “extreme egoism, pursuit of luxury lifestyle no matter the costs, elbowing one’s way through.” This is how the “dodgers” (*cwaniacy*) have “trivialized the meaning of socialism, and have reduced it the question

⁸³ Jan Olechno, “Nożycami przez prasę” [Press review] *Odgłosy* 37 (1967): 5; the original article was authored by Antoni Piekar.

⁸⁴ Karol Badziak, “Miłość ojczyzny nie jedno ma imię” [Love for the fatherland has many faces] *Odgłosy* 46 (1968): 7.

⁸⁵ Eisler, *Marzec 1968*, 130.

of television sets, refrigerator, electric shavers, and automobiles.” Party cells in all institutions “started resembling courts – the secretary was surrounded by a cringing retinue, and things no longer could be said in a straightforward manner – only by some diplomacy, tricks.” Party meetings “started resembling cocktail parties,” and labor was no longer the measure of human worth – it was eclipsed by “fine manners and proper conduct.”⁸⁶

The view that the “rules of the game” in the all-national getting established materially were becoming increasingly obscured and arbitrary was perhaps the strongest incentive for the embrace of conspiracy theories where the agency responsible for one’s relative deprivation is far away in realms unattainable for the rank-and-file. This is the hallmark of modern anti-Semitism, as well as Polish “illiberalism” that returned with vengeance in the 2000s.⁸⁷ It was expressed in that fashion first in 1968, and, as it was often noted, Łódź excelled then in anti-Semitism. The Łódź Party cell disseminated copies of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁸⁸ Mieczysław Moczar, the head of the “nationalist” party wing, the *chamy*, was actually from Łódź. A pundit argued that Moczar championed “a folkish (*ludowy*) type of socialism, based upon primitive class hostility towards the Jews, whom he knew from his youth spent in Łódź, when the Jew was synonymous with the capitalist.”⁸⁹ Just as the Kielce pogrom was had little to do pre-war anti-Semitism, likewise the “March events” can be understood only in the context of the post-war patterns of upward social mobility. The 1968 anti-Semitism was unlike the traditional “production-based nationalism” of the Łódź textile workers (see Chapter Three). Instead, as I already suggested, it was consumption-based. The sentiment that Łódź was contributing more to the national economy than it received back, and hence was “exploited” was paramount. The sacking of the Ciuksza ensemble was explained by workers in this way. In 1967, a Łódź sociologist published an article, where he argued that Łódź was Poland’s “most industrious city” – here the ratio between production and consumption of the national product was 3.5 times higher in Łódź than in Warsaw and Wrocław, double that of Poznań, and 30 per cent higher than in Kraków. This was the “factual basis” for the “realistic demand” that Łódź should be treated “fairer” in the national redistribution of goods (see also Plate 7.2).

The sense of being exploited by those “out there” was paramount in 1968. Meat was one of the most contentious products. State administration received letters with such content: “People are cursing! We’ve had enough of that tragic war, starvation and

⁸⁶ Zbigniew Nienacki, “O potrzebie ideowości” [On the need for party-mindedness] *Odgłosy* 39 (1963): 1, 7.

⁸⁷ See Don Kalb, “Conversations with a Polish populist: Tracing hidden histories of globalization, class, and dispossession in postsocialism (and beyond),” *American Ethnologist* 36, no. 2 (2009): 207-223.

⁸⁸ Janusz Tazbir, *Protokoły Mędrców Syjonu: Autentyk Czy Falszyfikat* (Warszawa: Interlibro, 1992), 136.

⁸⁹ Andrzej Wróblewski quoted In: Eisler, *Marzec 1968*, 113.

concentration camps. We suffer from indigence from this war in Vietnam and with the Arabs – because food is sent there as it used to be during the war in Korea. And now we have to stand in lines for hours only to get some lousy piece of meat.”⁹⁰ There was a widespread rumor in 1968 that the world was preparing for World War Three. The notion that shortages in Poland resulted from global politics was widespread, regardless of the fact that the ratio of export to import of meat improved significantly: in 1955 it was 81 to 2, whereas in 1968 it stood at 176 to 79.⁹¹ But the sense of disempowerment and increasingly unclear rules of the game was commonplace. The following detail is telling. The survey that compared the dwellers of Włada Bytomska with the rest of Łódź featured a question on the state lottery. Łódź’s nascent elite bought significantly fewer lottery tickets than the rest of Łódź. “In Włada Bytomska there is,” *Odgłosy* commented, “plenty of persistence (*upór*) and belief in one’s own capacities and far less daydreaming and belief in miracles.”⁹² Those who remained outside of that “paradise,” however, increasingly succumbed to the latter.

Łódź, a journalist argued in 1967, was “a city of daydreamers,” as its dwellers bought (after Warsaw and Silesia) most lottery tickets in Poland. Its growing popularity illustrates the increasing sense that hard work was not enough for attaining the status symbols of the age. In the 1960s, often not money, but automobiles were the major awards in lotteries. She recalled an incident she observed on the street of Łódź: a young couple on a walk suddenly stopped in front of an expensive blue Ford. The young man said: “that’s precisely the car I am going to buy – only I’ll take a different color.” The girl asked how he will pay for it. “I’ll win the lottery” – he answered. One of the onlookers burst in laughter, the journalist continues, but a number of other ones nodded as if confirming the soundness of the young man’s judgment. Not incidentally, the year before the “March events,” a “massive attack of the public opinion on the state lottery” took place. The sense of dashed hopes was ubiquitous in letters people sent to the institution: “it’s wholly unjust: I’ve been playing the lottery for 10 years now, and I never won more than 70 zloty. Therefore I kindly ask you to do something, so I can win at least a few thousand – otherwise my family will laugh at me. My wife does not know that I’m still playing, because she ridicules me. She even calculated how much money I would have now had I not played. So please do help me win.”⁹³

⁹⁰ Jarosz, *Afera Mięsna*, 178.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁹² Julian Brysz, “Nowe mieszkania – nowe postawy” [New attitudes in new apartments] *Odgłosy* 47 (1963): 1, 5.

⁹³ Teresa Wojciechowska, “Gdzie zgubiliśmy 137 milionów?” [Where did you lose 137 million?] *Odgłosy* 22 (1967): 4.

Geography of champagne socialism

The proliferation of urban legends and rumors of exploitation as well as conspiracy theories are, as Rosemary Coombe argued, a direct consequence of the annihilation of place by space, and the emergence of the “demonic place of not-there.”⁹⁴ I will discuss how urban “material expansion” altered the public space in the 1970s, and how it was linked to “epistemic rescaling” in Chapter Eight. What is important to stress here is that the March Events were the very first occurrence of that sort in Poland. Although it is remembered as a temporal event, it had a very strong spatial dimension too. Symbolic violence and retributive rhetoric was directed not only at the Zionists (operating outside of Poland’s boundaries) but also at Warsaw. “I think that after the March events,” wrote *Odgłosy*’s editor-in-chief, “we will perceive differently the problem of centralization. It has been criticized for decades, but it only became further aggravated. I think it is time to reexamine Warsaw’s privileged status as the capital city (*priorytet warszawski*). The ‘other Poland’ (*Polska B*), i.e. cities and provinces perceived from Warsaw at utter backwater and hopeless exile have demonstrated their political maturity far better than Warsaw – the capital of the ‘privileged Poland’ (*Polska A*).” The most important lesson drawn from the March events, he stressed, was “not that the police clashed with protesting students, or that in the working-class showed its loyalty to the Party in that critical hour. At last we ceased feeling disempowered by the conviction that everything was being decided upon somewhere in Warsaw, or, to be more precise, in some highly clandestine Varsovian circles. We realized that Poland’s affairs can be settled in Poland. Let’s hope that this will become the decisive element for the positive evaluation of the March events in the longer run.”⁹⁵ The “Poland” from the above passage represented everything *but* the post-gentry and elitist Warsaw.

The enemy in Łódź during the March events was not only located in the “demonic place of not-there,” or in the despised Warsaw, but was also close and very tangible – the Film School. It was attacked as the hotbed of cosmopolitanism, egoism and “contempt” towards the “common people,” and many of its lecturers (including the rector) were sacked.⁹⁶ Ironically, the line of criticism was very similar to the one pursued in *Knife in the Water* (Polański left Poland soon after his film was nominated for the Academy

⁹⁴ Rosemary J. Coombe, “The Demonic Place of the Not-There: Trademark Rumors in the Imaginary Spaces of Postindustrialism,” in *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta James Ferguson (Durham: Duke University Press), 249-274.

⁹⁵ Waław Biliński, “Trzy grosze naiwnego” [A dupe’s two-cent’s worth] *Odgłosy* 15 (1968): 1, 3.

⁹⁶ Eisler, *Marzec 1968*, 221-222; for anti-intellectual sentiments in the Soviet Union see Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 72-76.

Award, so he was not affected personally). Yet, it cannot be understood outside of the fierce struggles over cultural production that unfolded between Warsaw and the “hinterland” throughout the 1960s. The change of focus from production to consumption was linked to the changes in the public culture, or, to be more precise, in the mode of production of culture. The separation of the passive audience and the “gifted” performer/producer of culture was in the making precisely during the long 1960s in Poland. While in Łódź’s traditional musical culture, for example, that separation was merely formal (Ciuksza was considered “ours” by the workers because his orchestra was physically present in the city and in their lives), the abode of cultural production was becoming increasingly hidden – or distant. The increasing importance of cinema and television went hand in hand with attempts to centralize audiovisual production in Warsaw. Hence every now and then various pundits and professors of the Film School argued that it should be moved to Warsaw. Especially after the triumphs of the Polish cinematography (of which Polański’s film was the pinnacle) the Film School was increasingly described as being “in a crisis,” and the most common remedy was its removal from Łódź. Antoni Bohdziewicz, one of the school’s leading professors, championed the “onion argument” that he repeated on several occasions throughout the 1960s. “Arguments of the opposite side,” he argued, “are rather amusing and remind me of arguments from the domain of horticulture. Onions ought to be grown where people feel like eating them. It is absurd, for onions ought to be planted where there is the best soil for their growth, and only then they should be delivered to consumers.”⁹⁷

This is precisely what the “opposite side” feared most: reducing Łódź to a mere place of cultural consumption, with no possibility of contributing to the shape of national culture, but also with no influence on the place Łódź occupies on Poland’s cultural map. Advocates of moving the Film School to Warsaw argued that most of its staff lived in Warsaw, and hence had to commute to Łódź. Further, Bohdziewicz and others argued, “in Łódź the student dormitory is located at one end of the city, and the Film School at the other. Students often walk. They encounter no intellectual or artistic adventure on that long way. Of course this would have been very different in Warsaw.”⁹⁸ For those who argued in favor of keeping the Film School in Łódź, the very same points betokened the “detachment” of the Film School from social realities and the “common people.” The Film School had been monopolized by people from Warsaw, the argument run, for whom teaching in Łódź was one of their many jobs – and hence they paid increasingly less heed to it. Many of its lecturers were absent for 20 of the 32 weeks of teaching.

⁹⁷ “Łódź czy Warszawa? (rozmowa o PWSF)” [Warsaw or Łódź? A debate on the Film School]

Współczesność 22 (1959): 1, 5.

⁹⁸ “Łódź czy Warszawa?”, see also: Wiesław Jażdżyński’s “Niedźwiedzie przysługi” [A disservice] *Odgłosy* 13 (1967): 2; Kazimierz Karabasz, Jan Łomnicki, Antoni Bohdziewicz, “Dyskusja o szkole filmowej” [A discussion on the Film School] *Ekran* 19 (1968): 3.

But also only children from “good families” (found mainly in Warsaw) were now studying at the Film School. When the Film School enjoyed its apogee, in the late 1950s, it hosted students from all of Poland’s corners. If students admitted in 1952 and 1957 (Polański was among them) came from nearly all of Poland’s major (and even minor) cities, now out of 45 students of film directing 28 lived permanently in Warsaw. Only three of the 45 came from a working-class background, and none from the countryside. “Are talents and merits only to be found in the families of government ministers, top managers of the culture industry, architects and composers?” – they asked rhetorically.⁹⁹ The crisis of the Polish Film industry, and the Film School, stemmed, they argued, not from it being located in Łódź, but rather from its ill-management and monopolization of it by Warsaw. “Will equipment that is badly used in Łódź will suddenly be used adequately in Warsaw?”¹⁰⁰ This was a more general problem: for example only publishing houses located in Warsaw had the right to buy licenses for translating foreign books. “Such usurpation, backed by the concentration of all decision-makers in the realm of culture in Warsaw, is grave malady. The March events” wrote *Odgłosy* in an editorial, “are a clear sign that it is time to reform Poland’s culture.”¹⁰¹

The key notion that organized the 1968 discontents against cultural centralism was *Warszawka* (literally: the petty Warsaw) – the Polish version of what is known elsewhere as “champagne socialism” or *gauche caviar*. It is not accidental that in Poland this notion gained a very specific geographical twist. Although anti-Warsaw sentiments have a long history,¹⁰² in post-war Poland *Warszawka* gained a very specific (and highly pejorative) meaning. It referred to the 1920s and 1930s group of Marxist literati and artists, that dictated the fashions of Poland’s antebellum culture, and that has been recently brilliantly describe by Marci Shore in her generational biography.¹⁰³ The war both decimated the cohort and annihilated the built environment that sustained it. In 1946, a leading Stalinist journalist, argued clumsily but passionately: “*Warszawka*: pink and glittering with dancing-halls’ neons, vulgarized in jazz staccatos, driving around in furious taxis and gorging on Wiener schnitzels, has been burned down to ashes.”¹⁰⁴ Such a judgment was, however, premature.

⁹⁹ Jerzy Wilmański, “Jaka jest ta szkoła?” [What is this school like?] *Odgłosy* 27 (1968): 4, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Waclaw Biliński, “O tulipanach ich przesadzaniu i cebulkach” [On cultural onions] *Odgłosy* 24 (1968): 4.

¹⁰¹ Editorial, *Odgłosy* 22 (1968): 1.

¹⁰² Jerzy Michalski, “‘Warszawa’ czyli o antystołecznych nastrojach w czasach Stanisława Augusta” [On the dislike of Warsaw in the times of Stanislaus Augustus], *Studia Warszawskie*, Vol. 12 (1972): 9-78.

¹⁰³ Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁴ Wanda Odolska in: Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 173.

The 1950s were still in many ways dominated by intellectuals who gained their position during the antebellum cultural life of Warsaw. In 1959, *Współczesność*—a new biweekly edited by a generation of intellectuals too young to have colluded with Stalinism—gradually gained an increasingly strong position on Poland’s cultural map. That position was also achieved by their vehement criticism of *Warszawka*. Their usage of that notion was quite narrow: it mainly denoted members of the pre-war Skamander group (such as Tuwim). Although the Skamander poetry “drew upon the spoken language and in this sense reflected the more general impulse of leftist intellectuals to liberate themselves from bourgeoisie elitism,”¹⁰⁵ their young post-war critics emphasized that Skamander’s playful and cabaret-like aesthetic was gullible, elitist and inadequate to a post-Holocaust world. A critic sympathizing with the youth singled out *Warszawka*’s three cardinal sins: their “moralizing and preaching register” with recourse to personal insults and invectives; regular verse “peppered with elaborate rhymes and puns;” and “total lack of fantasy: satire of that type does not process facts, only reports them.” Word play, the hallmark of *Warszawka* style, was according to him outdated: contemporary sense of humor hinged upon ridiculing the speakers themselves, rather than the adversary.¹⁰⁶

This debate was resonant in the entire country, and even local dailies referred to it. Soon, *Warszawka* started denoting all of Warsaw’s left intellectuals, including the younger generation from *Współczesność* that was an outspoken advocate for moving the Film School to Warsaw, and a strong critic of Łódź and its intellectual elites.¹⁰⁷ In 1966, *Odgłosy*’s editor spitefully described the rules of the “Warsaw-like disputes”: “please take a look at photographs published in the latest *Kultura*. These refined gentlemen are our top pundits debating pornography. Please look carefully at these ties, at this wonderful play of countenances and hands, at Krzysztof Teodor Toeplitz holding a wine glass. What a truly European grace, what a refined nonchalance and self-assertion!” Their style was, *Odgłosy* commented, a blend of feigned modesty and cryptic language, “unintelligible to a common citizen from the cultural hinterland.” Toeplitz argued that sexual revolution was far more advanced in Poland than in, say, Sweden. For Swedes, he claimed, sexual intercourse was merely a hygienic affair, whereas Poles engaged in their love life more emotionally. “A Warsaw-like discussion,” *Odgłosy* sarcastically summed up, “always unfolds thus: first readers find out that they are completely incompetent in what is being talked about and then they receive in compensation some lousy complement – that, for example, that their conduct

¹⁰⁵ Shore, *Caviar and Ashes*, 23.

¹⁰⁶ “Jeszcze o 'Warszawce’” [More on *Warszawka*], *Współczesność*, 17 (1959): 5. See also: Zbigniew Irzyk, “Z chłopskiej piersi i z buduaru,” [Peasants and eroticism in literature] *Współczesność* 13 (1959): 4, Ernest Bryll and Stanisław Grochowiak “Sprzedaję wspomnienia,” [I sell my memories] *Współczesność* 13 (1959): 1.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. Roman Śliwonik, “Debiut łódzki” [A debut from Łódź] *Współczesność* 23 (1959): 9.

is more edifying than that of Swedes. No wonder then the Swedes raided us in the seventeenth century, and not the other way around!”¹⁰⁸

If read in the context of the “March events” (Toeplitz, just as his uncle Jerzy who was Film School’s rector sacked in 1968, was of Jewish decent), the foregoing passage can be read as anti-Semitism. But much more is at stake here. The typical outline of an anti-Semitic argument runs somehow like this: one’s amicable demeanor is actually a guise for a “hidden” Jew, who harbors all sorts of exploitative ulterior motives. The unmasking of *Warszawka* was similar in form, but slightly different in content. Those who criticized both the professors and students of the Film School argued, like above, that the polite and genteel veneer ought to be unmasked. Underneath, utter “*chamstwo* and contempt” lurked. Film School Students’ “contempt to others is ubiquitous. Merry boys in leather jackets scorn students from both the University and the Polytechnic, they treat colleagues from other artistic schools, musicians and visual artists (without whom no film could ever be made) as their natural minions.” Andrzej Makowiecki (both a musician and a journalist) recalled a recent incident from the SPATiF – the chain of Poland’s five most celebrated restaurants, where only artists, journalist and other “people of letters” could enter. It was also the very place where the “Zionists” were first persecuted in Łódź – their former colleagues would not sit with them. “Recently a sodden drunk student of film directing came up to me in SPATiF. He joined our table without asking. He said: buy me a round, you twat! It is hard to reconstruct our conversation, as it comprised many unprintable words. Suddenly, the bearded student dreamed up that he had been accused of Zionism. – Me? – he bawled out – Fuck! For twenty years I was being screwed in this country for being a prince!” According to Makowiecki, the student yelled at the waiter, stole a pack of cigarettes from a neighboring table, and offended nearly everyone.¹⁰⁹ He was a quintessential cosmopolitan *cham* because he showed no respect for others, and especially people from the “other Poland.”

In this sense, the March Events were a lesson in egalitarianism. Just as for the victims, such as Michnik, it was a festival of *chamstwo* (denoting both the party wing that gained the upper hand and the style in which the state capture was executed), it was in many ways a reaction to what was perceived as the encroaching *chamstwo* of Poland’s champagne socialists. *Chamstwo*, as I suggested in Chapter Six always the behavior of others, was the overarching metaphor that captured the clash over the means of consumption and cultural production and the hidden injuries of class that exploded in 1968. The unpleasant and nasty form in which they coalesced with anti-Semitism notwithstanding, they cannot be reduced to sudden eruption of an inchoate ethnic

¹⁰⁸ Wiesław Jażdżyński, “Wiemy, że nie wiemy, czyli warszawska dyskusja” [We know that we don’t know – a typical Warsaw discussion] *Odgłosy* 16 (1966): 2.

¹⁰⁹ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Ustaw się, kolego!” [Elbow your way through, mate!] *Odgłosy* 17 (1968): 1, 5.

prejudice. Rather, the increasingly unclear (or rather family-based) redistribution of goods and privileges in the collective consumption was the main concern. Soon, similar issues returned in a different context. Another attempt to move the Film School to Warsaw occurred already in 1971 – and this time it was on the agenda of the Polish Parliament.¹¹⁰ The Film School was attacked for its elitism, for the “cult of artful dodgery and cunning, respect for the dollar and the automobile.”¹¹¹ Its reputation as the hotbed of “egoism and separation” did not recede in the years following the March Events. Wojciech Marczewski, who graduated from the Film School in 1969, and who was one of the few students who were not from Warsaw, recalled the 1960s much later: “Generally I’m not a group person. And this was an elite school on top of that. People felt they are great artists. Maybe it was Polański who first dictated such a style: one emphasized being a filmmaker by wearing different clothes and so on. I had a hard time there. I was younger than them, and I grew up in Chojny [Łódź’s working-class district]. Between me and them – people from Warsaw, who had international experience and international contacts – there was a vast abyss. They even spoke differently, they knew how to partake in a discussion, make jokes. I was easy to hurt me, I did not know how to defend. I was very much aware of how parochial I was.”¹¹²

As Alain Turaine argued already in 1968, “the movement of May is a new form of the class struggle. More than any other collective action of the last decades, this movement revealed and thus constituted the fundamental conflict of our society. That way of putting it is farther than it might seem from the proclamations of the participants themselves, for it means that we are dealing with a new social conflict, whose nature and participants are no longer the same as in the previous society, in truly capitalist society ... The French students, like those of Berlin and Berkeley, began a struggle against the apparatus of integration, manipulation, and aggression. It is these words and not the word ‘exploitation’ which best define the nature of the conflict.”¹¹³ The 1968 movement, it is often argued, breathed a tangibly political life into Henri Lefebvre’s notion of the “right to the city.”¹¹⁴ In Poland, 1968 is a rather shameful date. And rightly so. But the picture is a little more complex than just that. Although, as Tony Judt argued, the West has generally “turned a deaf ear to rumblings of discontent in Warsaw or Prague,” because “Western cultural revolution of the era was remarkably parochial: if Western youth looked beyond their borders at all, it was to exotic lands whose image

¹¹⁰ Jerzy Urbankiewicz, Jerzy Wilmański “Dwugłos o Szkole Filmowej” [On the Film School] *Odgłosy* 4 (1972): 1,4.

¹¹¹ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Ustaw się, kolego!”

¹¹² Wojciech Marczewski, “Ucieczka do kina Wolność” [Escape from “Freedom” Cinema, interview by Katarzyna Bielas] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (23 May 1997): 14.

¹¹³ in: Charles Tilly, *The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930* (London: J.M.Dent & Sons Ltd, 1975), 23.

¹¹⁴ Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, “Lost in Transposition - Time, Space and the City,” in *Writings on Cities* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1996), 18-21.

floated free of the irritating constraints of familiarity,¹¹⁵ there are important parallels between what occurred on both sides of the Iron Curtain in 1968. Not only the French protestors expressed their solidarity with the Polish students, and Polish dissidents *Open Letter to the Party* was a very popular read amongst the revolutionarized students. The general lack of knowledge on the social movements in the socialist block stemmed in part, as Bauman pointed out, from the different role of the media. While in the West it generally became the mouthpiece for the student movement, in Poland the media sided with those who beat them up. It would be erroneous to say that Polish students fought for their right to the city – rather, they were interested in liberalization of cultural and intellectual climate in Poland. Those who actually fought for their right to the city in 1968 used generally unpleasant weapon of which anti-Semitism was one. They stood on the other side of the barricade, so to speak.

For Henri Lefebvre, the “right to the city” was opposed to the “right to nature.” Judt is wrong in holding that the 1960s were experienced radically different on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In both regions there was a movement towards suburban and/or rural-based leisure, and against the “noise, fatigue, and concentrationary universe of cities.” Nature was turned into “the separate place of pleasure and the retreat of ‘creativity.’” The right to the city, Lefebvre argued, was not about the “return to traditional cities,” but rather working-class-based vision of the new urban future. But this, as I showed, was being increasingly challenged by the automobile-based vision of urban development. “This right slowly meanders through the surprising detours of nostalgia and tourism, the return to the heart of the traditional city, and the call of existent or recently developed centralities.”¹¹⁶ In both East and West Europe, it erupted in 1968. After the nascent socialist elite had monopolized the command over space and colonized nature through tourism (both largely achieved through the automobile), and moved out of the inner-city, the city was, again, for grabs. But the outward movement, resulting largely from struggles over the inner-city (described in Chapter Four and Five) was accompanied by a movement engendering “new centralities.” I noted this already with regard to the simultaneous suburbanization and proto-gentrification of Bałuty. In Chapter Eight I will describe now the center of Łódź was actually further refashioned to serve the interest of the rising new elite, which led to the further disempowerment of the rank-and-file.

¹¹⁵ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 421-422.

¹¹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1996), 157-158.



Photograph Eleven – Łódź's Manhattan

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SEEING LIKE A HIGH-RISE

The March Events of 1968 were the very first portend of the gradual marginalization of urban place in relation to space in post-war Poland. That trend became fully conspicuous, paradoxically, during the fast urbanization of the 1970s. Edward Gierek – one of the most rabid anti-Semites organizing anti-Zionist rallies in 1968 – became the First Secretary in 1971 and until 1980 lend state socialism a new “technocratic” veneer. That swift metamorphosis shows that there was more continuation than breach between the two Communist regimes and that indeed the long 1960s was a coherent period. It was during the 1970s that the triad of urbanization (or haussmanization), professionalization and “cinematization,” theorized in Chapter One and also encountered in Chapter Six, fully set its mark on Poland’s material tissue. By the late 1970s, the old “consumption fetishes” such as the automobile or a three-room apartment in a block of flats lost their mesmerizing quality as they became relatively accessible. The rapid changes were becoming ever more *visible*. Already in 1969 *Odgłosy* reported: “the face of Łódź, formerly known as the ‘evil city,’ is changing right in front of our eyes. This process is so evident that we can spare figures describing the massiveness of the urban reconstruction that transforms our city into a center of labor and science. Far more convincing are the sleek silhouettes of the high-rise incorporated into the inner-city landscape or factories built of steel and glass. These are no longer only symbols of progress. Instead, in the twenty fifth year of People’s Poland, they

started dominating the landscape.”¹ What used to be “revolutionary dreams” now became a matter of everyday experience for large masses of people.

In Chapter One I described how the long twentieth century was a century of geography, and that the United States were competing with the Soviet Union for leadership using largely the same means. During the 1970s, when the West was immersed in a crisis, and the Soviet block was after three decades of rapid growth and expansion, it was not all that certain that the twentieth century would be “American.” In Poland, this increasing sturdiness of state socialism was backed up by material expansions. The agency behind all these developments was, of course, the state. In Chapters Four and Five I argued against the totalitarian school thesis that the Stalinist authorities wielded a tight grip over the terrorized society. Instead, I argued, the state power was enormously fragile during the very first post-war decade. Instead of forcing the population to conform to their will, they had to adjust their policies to the grassroots moral economy and demands, and especially to the “excluded economy.” As we saw, the Battle Over Trade was an attempt to appease the excluded economy by internalization; the professionalization of retail commerce, as we will see in this chapter, brought this process to its logical end. The comparison between the Kielce pogrom of 1946 and the March Events of 1968 from Chapter Seven showed what had changed over “twenty years of People’s Poland.” The increasing support the Communist authorities enjoyed, that peaked at the unquestionable 1970s heyday, was precisely the consequence of these concessions.

Given the long history of weak state power in Poland (see Chapter Two), during the 1970s the Polish state was, perhaps, as strong as never before and, quite certainly, as never after. The “Polish crisis” of 1979-1981, that I will analyze in greater detail in Chapter Nine, put an end to that expansion of the state power.² What is known as the “rolling-back” of the nation (and welfare) state, that started in Poland precisely back then, was, of course, a global phenomenon. One of the most influential critiques of the twentieth century global “state-centrism” is James Scott *Seeing like a State*. In his critique of the “blind fate in machines and large scale operations,” the bureaucratic logic, rational control, tight planning and spatial streamlining, James Scott argued that all the state-led large scale projects of social engineering were doomed to failure.³ He analyzed the various manifestations of “high modernism,” an ideology most influential in the period described in Chapter One as the “age of reconstruction” (1850-1914), namely the “supreme self-confidence about continued linear progress, the development

¹ Jerzy Darnal, “Teraz i jutro” [Today and tomorrow] *Odgłosy* 7 (1969): 1, 3.

² Batara Simatupang, *The Polish Economic Crisis: Background, Causes, and Aftermath* (London: Routledge, 1994).

³ James C Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale agrarian studies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 58, 237, 242.

of scientific and technical knowledge, the expansion of production, the rational design of social order, the growing satisfaction of human needs, and, not least, an increasing control over nature (including human nature) commensurate with scientific understanding of natural laws.”⁴ These included the Prussian scientific forestry, Soviet collectivization of agriculture, the building of Brasília, or taming nature through giant dams. Such development project, he argued, were all directed at “sedentarization”: fixing people in place. Further they brought a massive epistemic change: one can rule large populations only by making them “legible.” Scott argued: “functionaries of any large organizations ‘sees’ the human activity that is of interest to him largely through the simplified approximations of documents and statistics: tax proceeds, lists of taxpayers, land records, average incomes, unemployment numbers, mortality rates, trade and productivity figures, the total number of cases of cholera in a certain district.” Such bureaucratic knowledge “implies a viewer whose place is central and whose vision is synoptic. State simplifications ... are designed to provide authorities with a schematic view of their society, a view not afforded to those without authority.”⁵ This is the essence of seeing like a state.

At the face value, Scott’s argument is similar to Sennett’s in *The Uses of Disorder*. At a closer scrutiny, however, there are stark differences. While Scott in his critique of “bulldozing habit of mind” and the bureaucratic “haste and insensibility,” contrasts Le Corbusier’s abstract and impersonal landscapes and modes of knowing to Jane Jacobs’, and her celebration of the “human warmth” and the intimate urban experience, Sennett’s agenda is precisely the one trying to eschew the traps of the celebration of closely-knit urban community.⁶ The repressed civil society was, according to Scott, one of the key prerequisites for the state-led social engineering and the homogenization of landscapes. As I already argued, such developments were not merely imposed from above – they were also negotiated, and in fact could not have been executed without the collusion of large portions of the population. The discontents with “large scale project,” bureaucratic and metropolitan impersonality, so well captured by both Scott and Jacobs, are, as Sennett showed, part of the “package” so to speak. Increasing impersonality went hand in hand with new fantasies of intimacy – and both eroded the public space. The mechanization of awareness (see Chapter Six) ushered in a powerful remaking of the meaning of inter-human relations and forms of community that were more “willed” than “experienced.” The most spectacular of such technologies of togetherness were the

⁴ Ibid., 89-90.

⁵ Ibid., 76-77. 79, see also: Deborah Coon, “Standardizing the Subject: Experimental Psychologists, Introspection, and the Quest for a Technoscientific Ideal,” *Technology and Culture* 34 (1993): 757-783, see also: Theodore Porter, “Statistical utopianism in the age of aristocratic efficiency,” *Osiris* 17 (2002): 210-227.

⁶ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 56, 132-134, 237. See also: Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 58-60.

electronic media – perhaps the best example of something that by promising to bring people closer together actually set them further apart. I will analyze in this chapter, following Sennett, how the new rescaled identity was increasingly shaped by the mass media, and how this was accompanied by the deepening centralization of cultural production, and turning urbanites into passive audiences and consumers of culture (largely neo-Jagiellon) produced elsewhere. The anti-statist sentiments, and attempts to return to the “lost community,” summarized by the slogan “small is beautiful” (that Scott actually quotes), and hoping to return to what I called in Chapter Six the “antropometric” scale, I will describe in Chapter Nine.

By focusing so much on the state, Scott missed the crucial link between urbanization and expansion of the state. In this chapter I will analyze the question of centrality as quintessentially urban. Seeing like a state is, of course, a metaphor. What I describe as seeing like a high-rise, on the contrary, is a real vantage point. Suburbanization, described in Chapter Seven, ushered in an epistemic novelty: the possibility to look at the inner-city from both a larger distance and from above. The inner-city was thus “discovered.” Because, as I already stressed, the urban process is often contradictory, suburbanization went parallel with rebuilding of the city-center. This had two facets. First, the “historical” old city centers were discovered (as in Krakow) or actually built from scratch (as in Warsaw). Because the early attempts to create an equally attractive “old town” in Łódź failed (as I described in Chapter Seven), and because of Łódź’s absence in the Polish historical spaces (see Chapter Two), a new district of “high-rise,” of commerce and culture, dubbed the *Łódzkie City*, was built. This is what *Odgłosy* referred to when it described Łódź as “a center of culture and science, one of the most important ones in Poland.” This was an attempt at a self-fulfilling prophecy: the *Łódzkie City* was a local centralizing move that was to counterbalance a larger centralizing process responsible for the brain drain to Warsaw. *Odgłosy* also boasted: “Łódź is also a tremendous center of artistic life, a seat of numerous artistic milieus, it has its own writers and visual artists, actors and film directors. Their presence, thanks to the expansion of the material base for culture, is increasingly evident in the city life.” One of the key components of that “base” was a residential high-rise district designated for skilled professionals from the culture industry, known to this very day in Łódź vernacular as the *Łódzki Manhattan*. It eclipsed Włada Bytomska as the site for Łódź’s elite, that was to comprise mainly artists and young professionals with families.

The conundrum of centrality

Rescaling and power

“The exorbitant taste of Bolshevnik leaders for technology, electricity, giant production units, machines and the human machinery of a disciplined work force and an army,”

argued Richard Stites, “their ‘large scale theories’, and their dominant view of the city as the locus of power and reason against the lethargic and somnolent countryside—all of this set the stage for what has sometimes been called the war between country and city, reflecting the longstanding dichotomies of consciousness and spontaneity, state and people, leviathan and anarchy, and, in Boris Pilnyak’s phase, ‘machines and wolves’.”⁷ By the 1970s, this war seemed to be over – although not everybody beyond the Iron Curtain noticed that. As Lefebvre himself pointed out, “it is *not* obvious that these so-called socialist countries have shown *as much* initiative (more or less successful) in urbanization as they have in industrialization.”⁸ Precisely for that reason, academic reflection in the Soviet Block on the consequences of urbanization was indeed impressive.⁹ Polish theorists of urbanization were in tacit agreement with what may seem at first a rather strange opening tenet of Lefebvre’s *Urban Revolution*: “society has become completely urbanized.”¹⁰ By this, they did not mean that cities have blanketed Earth’s entire surface. Rather, that urbanization has become such an important social force that no aspect of human existence escaped it.

Paradoxically, this hypothesis is best tested not in cities but in the countryside. In 1970s Poland, the trend towards “deglomeration” – both urban and industrial – meant that while during the century of “centralized urbanization” people had to travel to the city, now the city moved to the people. The administrative reform, executed in 1972-1975, replaced former 17 provinces with 49, and the new two-tier system was intended to bring both state bureaucracy and the city “closer to the people.”¹¹ Before, in many villages the only “missionaries of the modern world” (to wit socialism and urbanization) were the school teacher, medical practitioner, and the veterinary; especially in wintertime it was even difficult to get in or out of these isolated places.

⁷ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 52.

⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 138, emphasis added.

⁹ Marcin Czerwiński, *Życie Po Miejsku* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1974), Paweł Rybicki, *Spółczesność Miejska* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1972), Stefan Nowakowski, *Narodziny Miasta* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1967), Helena Syrkus, *Ku Idei Osiedla Społecznego: 1925-1975* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1976), Aleksander Wallis, *Socjologia Wielkiego Miasta* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1967); Aleksander Wallis, *Socjologia I Kształtowanie Przestrzeni* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971); Aleksander Wallis, *Miasto I Przestrzeń* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1977), Bohdan Jałowiecki, *Spoleczne Zasady Funkcjonowania Miasta* (Katowice: AE, 1978); Bohdan Jałowiecki, *Człowiek W Przestrzeni Miasta* (Katowice: Śląski Instytut Naukowy, 1980); Bohdan Jałowiecki, *Miasto I Społeczne Procesy Urbanizacji: Problemy, Teorie, Metody* (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1972); Bohdan Jałowiecki, *Spoleczne Procesy Rozwoju Miasta* (Katowice: Śląski Instytut Naukowy, 1976).

¹⁰ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 1.

¹¹ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Jutro zaczyna się dziś” [Tomorrow starts today] *Odgłosy* 53 (1972): 1, 3, Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Drugi etap” [The second phase] *Odgłosy* 47 (1983): 3, see also: Andrzej Piskozub, *Dziedzictwo Polskiej Przestrzeni: Geograficzno-Historyczne Podstawy Struktur Przestrzennych Ziem Polskich* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1987), 217.

The increasing reach of the mass media and the automobile (especially the expanding National Bus Company's network) meant that no place by the 1970s Poland was "isolated."¹² In the 1950s, the urban missionaries lived in genteel poverty – and many, under pressures of the village community, had become "peasantized" (*schłopieć*) (school teachers, largely females under 30, eventually married into peasant families). Just as it was difficult for them to "keep up their cultural level and their influence upon the village community,"¹³ gradually the spread of urban culture came to their aid. Already in late 1960s, many people living in villages did not "wish to be called peasants (*chłopi*); they too are also laboring people, only that they work in agriculture. This is why they kindly ask to be referred to as farmers (*rolnicy*)."¹⁴ While being a peasant was a whole different way of life, being a farmer was an occupation. They were increasingly less distinguished by speech: the spread of television standardized the use of language and eroded the former linguistic city-country dichotomy. Unlike peasants, farmers were entitled to leisure and other privileges previously reserved for the city. The "cultural onion," to use Bohdziewicz's expression from Chapter Seven, and a number of other goods were now being brought to people. They urbanized sometimes even without the necessity of becoming urbanites.¹⁵ In this sense Poland was indeed urbanized in hundred percent.

The urban question for Lefebvre was largely the conundrum of centrality – "but a *centrality* that is understood in conjunction with the dialectical movement that creates or destroys it."¹⁶ In the age of industrial cities, centrality was relatively easy to pin down – although Lefebvre had warned that industrial cities were somehow "suspect." The Soviet planning, as in the "Disurbanists" movement of the 1920s, sought to bridge the rural-urban divide, and actually to abolish centrality. Its major theoretician "conjured up 'a destationed world meaning a land not only without cities but also without capitals, without a 'center', [denoting] not only geographical situation but also concentration of power, communication and culture ... The converse was openness, motion, freedom."¹⁷ The old divides were abolished by the universalization of urbanization, electrification and motion pictures – but it was an abolition of centrality as it was hitherto known. Consequently, new forms of centrality emerged.

¹² Tadeusz Papier, "Łódź i prowincja" [Łódź and the hinterland] *Odgłosy* 52-53 (1960): 7.

¹³ "Zaciąg siłaczek wciąż trwa" [Idealistic teachers still wanted] *Odgłosy* 38 (1958): 1, 5.

¹⁴ Tadeusz Gicgier, "...żonę poznałem w komisariacie" [I meet my wife at the police station] *Odgłosy* 35 (1966): 6, 7.

¹⁵ See also: Carole Nagengast, "Post-peasants and Poverty," in *Poland Beyond Communism: "transition" in Critical Perspective*, ed. Michal Buchowski, Edouard Conte, and Carole Nagengast, *Studia ethnographica Friburgensia* Bd. 25 (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 2001), 183-207

¹⁶ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 116.

¹⁷ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 194.

It was, of course, well visible even in the urban tissue of Moscow – already during Stalin’s reign it was substantially “monumentalized.” It became “a town of broad boulevards, huge buildings and big apartments blocks.” Mammoth projects such as the “notorious Palace of Soviets designed to be the largest building in the world, a skyscraper temple topped by a gargantuan statue of Lenin” appeared, and “restored the old respect for hugeness, order, symmetry— all associated with solemn and unchallenged authority.”¹⁸ But that retrofitting of the largest cities brought significant changes too. Łódź, for example, was no longer an urban island in an agricultural ocean. Its relation to its environs, as I argued in Chapter Five, changed radically. Also the “relative location” of the capital cities altered in that new urban system. The conflict over Warsaw’s increasingly central (or even monopolistic) position on the Polish cultural map, described in Chapter Seven, was a harbinger of this trend. As Błażej Brzostek demonstrated, between 1945 and 1970, Warsaw was substantially “bureaucratized” – the percentage of its population employed in administration doubled as compared to the pre-war period.¹⁹ This was reflected in the gradual swelling of the ranks of state bureaucracy but also in the coalescing culture industry. As Aleksander Wallis (Poland’s leading urban theorist) stressed, the problem of new centrality was twofold. First, it was a matter of *space* – and hence the problem of providing democratic spatial access to culture and the composition of Poland’s “cultural territory.”²⁰ Second, it is a matter of *place* – and hence the question of the redesigning of the city-center that reinvented itself in that new urban context.²¹

The question of changing centrality can be, as I suggested in Chapter Six, conceptualized as the problem of rescaling. I spoke of “the rescaling of identity” precisely in order to show the spatial underpinnings in the emergence of “urban consciousness.” While using the notion of “scale” carries a threat of reifying social processes into things, the notion of “rescaling” is inherently dynamic. It captures the changing geography of centrality and marginality. I described in both Chapters Six and Seven how the rescaled identity was increasingly space-bound rather than place-bound. The shift from place to space is precisely a shift in both the distribution and location of power. I noted the key role played by the state in that process. It would be tempting therefore to extend Neil Brenner’s narrative of the rescaling of the West European state to the regions behind the Iron Curtain.²² I do this in a slightly different way, however.

¹⁸ Ibid., 238.

¹⁹ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 18.

²⁰ Aleksander Wallis, *Pojęcie Obszaru Kulturowego* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1980); Aleksander Wallis, *Przestrzenny Układ Kultury* ([S.l.: s.n., 1966]; Aleksander Wallis, *Kultura I Wiąż Przestrzenna* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1978).

²¹ Aleksander Wallis, *Informacja I Gwar: O Miejskim Centrum*, Biblioteka Myśli Współczesnej (Warszawa: Państw. Instytut Wydawniczy, 1979).

²² Neil Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

When speaking of the rescaling of things, we run into the same danger of reification, or what is known as “fetishism of the state.”²³ Just as I did not speak of the “rescaling of the city” in Chapter Six – because the city as a coherent whole emerged only as a result of the rescaling, I prefer to describe which *realms* have become rescaled. This is a better solution also in the wake of what Bob Jessop described as the increasing “relativization of scales” – the state no longer attempts to find “an encompassing institutional fix on any single geographical scale” – such as the national – but instead maintains “a variable mix of institutional forms and governance mechanisms involved in stabilizing specific economic spaces in however provisional, partial, and temporary manner” it can do that.²⁴ Urban rescaling is therefore a process of the emergence of new forms of spatial centrality; economic rescaling is the change in the form and composition of what is the leading economic center; and epistemic rescaling is a evolution in the public domain, and forms of knowledge that operate therein, that is linked with the way politics is being done.

Rediscovery of the inner-city

While from the point of view of place, both suburbanization and the automobile are decentralizing processes, from the space-centered vantage point, both processes can be seen as centralizing ones. In other words, the diffusion of power in Łódź actually brought an increasing concentration of power in Warsaw. Włada Bytomska’s locational advantage was precisely that it was adjacent to the highway leading to Warsaw, and hence its separation from the rest of Łódź was twofold. Instead of gearing up our analysis to the level of the state, I prefer to describe what was doubtlessly “rescaling of the state” in terms of the changing relation between Łódź and Warsaw. Much of what I mean by the “state” was actually if not located in Warsaw then administered from there. If we phase our leading problem in such a way, then we see that it transcends just the analysis of “the state” (established practically from scratch from 1945). As I noted in Chapter Three, Warsaw emerged as the capital of the Jagiellon Poland – and although the Jagiellon space perished from European maps in 1795, it continued to be pertinent to Poland’s social life. I described in great detail how the Jagiellon space was an outcome of class struggles. All this survived with the central position of Warsaw and in the domination of the post-gentry elites in the life of the capital city. Because the rescaling of statehood was centered on Warsaw, it was intimately linked to the class relations inherent in the spatial relation between Warsaw and the rest of Poland. This is the link

²³ Michael T Taussig, “Maleficium: State Fetishism,” in *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, ed. Emily S Apter and William Pietz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 217–247, Philip Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State (1977),” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no. 1 (1988): 58–89.

²⁴ Quoted in: Neil Brenner, “The Urban Question: Reflections on Henri Lefebvre, Urban Theory and the Politics of scale,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24, no. 2 (2000): 361–378.

between rescaling and class.²⁵ Of course it is difficult to speculate if the nature of the Polish state would have been different if the capital city was located somewhere else. Some, like the geographer Andrzej Piskozub, claim that the way Poland was urbanized after 1945 and the way inequalities have become spatialized, stem from Stalin's erroneous decision to rebuilt Warsaw as Poland's capital city.²⁶ This is, of course, only counterfactual speculation.

The new bureaucratic face of Warsaw was, to be sure, lamented by those who remembered its pre-war character. "Warsaw – a city with no memories," noted down a literati. Only 15 per cent of Warsaw's inhabitants remembered its prewar vibrant cultural life. Another writer pointed out: that Warsaw's inner-city "used to be a lively district, saturated with culture. It had literary coffee house and bookshops both new and antique. Today, this is a district of dead office corridors. If one encounters a living soul over there, then this person is not interested in walking around but finding the office where they can get their things done."²⁷ As a sociologist noted, if Warsaw of 1938 was a relatively "compact" city with a concentric structure, now it was substantially "tessellated" (*mozaikowa*). A novelist argued that in Warsaw "everything leads to an empty field. It hosts a new type of a transient dweller, with no traditions. A human being is merely a part of the crowd, storming the city from the outside."²⁸ The inner-city, that used to be the host of the intelligentsia, was now taken over by the "anonymous crowd" and the "peasant-bureaucrat" (*chłopo-urzędnicy*). It is "a psychophysical type," he continued, "omnipresent on the street, in the store, in a restaurant, office or the university." He used to stroll on Warsaw's main promenade, the Nowy Świat. "I meet many acquaintances, or strangers who knew me. It made me feel 'at home'. One day I noticed a difference. I thought that I was passing by the very same people all with the very same nondescript look. No familiar face. This is when I realized I'm living in a different city. And I stopped going there."²⁹

For most others, however, this was the very first opportunity to visit such places. Paradoxically Warsaw's ensuing sprawl and suburbanization buttressed the central role of the inner-city. Because the new housing estates had no streets (with tenements on both sides) but rather apartment blocks scattered around, their geography induced a sense of spatial bewilderment. They "had no centers of their own. Everything dissolves there" wrote a journalist in 1963. "Thanks God we still have the Old Market Square. And people are people. That's where they stream – as if this was a center. In the

²⁵ See also: Jamie Gough, "Changing scale as changing class relations: variety and contradiction in the politics of scale," *Political Geography* 23, no. 2 (February 2004): 185-211.

²⁶ Piskozub, *Dziedzictwo Polskiej Przestrzeni*, 136-147, 266-272.

²⁷ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 141-142.

²⁸ Marian Brandys in: *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 393.

absence of a modern center – we need to get by with a medieval and a minuscular one.”³⁰ But this was hardly readapting old built environment for new purposes: Warsaw’s Old Town was destroyed in 90 per cent during the Second World War.³¹ Its reconstruction was not only Stalin’s order, but a “national ambition.” A leading architect declared in 1946 that “Warsaw cannot be like Łódź – a city without the past.” Hence rebuilding of the inner-city, as well as the Royal Castle, was a top priority.³² The reconstructed monuments, another expert argued, “were not only for the connoisseurs but constitute a suggestive document of history for the masses.”³³

As Wallis argued, the new urban consciousness (what I described in Chapter Six as the “rescaled identity”) was not really identification with the city as a whole but with the image of the historical center.³⁴ This is why it was so vital for Warsaw to rebuild its Old Town and a lack of something comparable in Łódź became the taproot of its future “crisis.” The former was completed officially in 1963, but the Royal Palace was built only in the 1970s. In the 1950s and 1960s Warsaw’s Old Market Square was largely used as an *ad hoc* parking lot.³⁵ Only by the end of the decade it was gradually taken over by tourists. “New cozy cafeterias and small fancy restaurants mushroomed,” described Wallis. “An inexpensive diner (*bar mleczny*) and a number of groceries disappeared. A large underwear store (*magazyn z bielizną*) was turned into an art gallery. A basement club with chansonnier’s live performances was opened, as well as a high-end pastry and coffee shop. Then an upscale antique store, and a number of goldsmith, engraving and souvenir workshops. Traffic was nearly completely eliminated from the Old Town area, which was the crossover point in the way the public spaces of the Old Town, and especially of the Old Market Square, was used.”³⁶

If Warsaw’s inner-city was rebuilt, in other Polish cities it was rediscovered. “I’m standing on a high-rise roof” wrote a Łódź journalist. “The morning is crystal-clear. Peace and quiet. Only gentle swoosh of the wind, but the hubbub from Piotrkowska does not reach that high. *Only now, standing on top of a high-rise, one can see how dense and chaotic the inner-city is.* Tight, seething mass of buildings high and low, brick and wooden, piled higgledy-piggledy.”³⁷ Suburbanization created the possibility of looking at the inner-city both from the outside and as a coherent (albeit chaotic) urban form. Such suburban gaze onto the inner-city, a popularized version of the aerial

³⁰ In Brzostek *Ibid.*, 389.

³¹ Jerzy Kochanowski, ed., *Zbudować Warszawę Piękną...: O Nowym Krajobrazie Stolicy (1944-1956)*, W Krainie PRL (Warszawa: Trio, 2003), 221.

³² *Ibid.*, 39.

³³ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁴ Wallis, *Informacja I Gwar*, 58-59.

³⁵ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 333.

³⁶ Wallis, *Informacja I Gwar*, 152.

³⁷ Jan Bąbiński, “Narodziny centrum” [Creating the center] *Odgłosy* 24 (1970): 1, 4, emphasis mine.

view onto the city, is omnipresent in photography of that time. A Kraków intellectual recalled the new vista that opened to him from his high-rise window: “Through the window in our kitchen I saw vast meadows – and that was quite a view! But when I moved to my room on the other side of the block, I had such a wonderful panorama of [inner-city] Kraków that I could, with the help of binoculars, check the time by looking at the clock on the City Hall Tower. By making a few steps within my apartment, and I changed a rural vista for an urban one.”³⁸ The critical difference between Łódź and Kraków was that the latter's medieval inner-city was spared from industrialization: one could “notice that Kraków had industrialized only in late antebellum period.”³⁹ Also the Stalinist industrialization in Kraków left the inner-city untouched and engendered a separate settlement of Nowa Huta. And this was precisely the reason why a leading geographer concluded that of all Polish city Kraków is the only one that has a city-center that, thanks to its architectural integrity (as opposed to Łódź's “chaos”), can serve best the needs of cultural consumption.⁴⁰

Europeanization of Poland

The irony is, of course, that Łódź's inner-city was laid on a grid structure, and hence did not resemble the “chaos” of the pre-modern city. Spatial pattern of pre-industrial cities, argued Scott, “could be said to privilege local knowledge over outside knowledge, including that of external political authorities. It functioned spatially in much the same way a difficult or unintelligible dialect would function linguistically.” Historically speaking, he continued, “the relative illegibility to outsiders of some urban neighbourhoods ... has provided a vital margin of political safety from control by outside elites.” There is an elective affinity between expansion of state power and uniformly laid out city so the urban geography is made “transparent from without.” Such an order cannot be achieved from inside – only from outside and from above: “the miniaturization imaginatively achieved by scale models of cities or landscapes was practically achieved with the airplane... By the virtue of its great distance, an aerial view resolved what might have seemed ground-level confusion into an apparently vaster order and symmetry. It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of the airplane for the modernist thought and planning.”⁴¹ In a high-rise such aerial view, formerly only reserved for the few, was now a daily experience of the many. It still,

³⁸ Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, *Przez Dziurkę Od Klucza: Życie Prywatne W Krakowie (1945-1989)* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2005), 50 On the “rediscovery” of the city center and the high-rise view, see: Wallis, *Informacja I Gwar*, 57-59.

³⁹ Aleksander Gieysztor, “Tradycja średniowieczna i renesansowa: jej erozja w kulturze miasta przemysłowego,” [Erosion of the medieval and renaissance tradition in the culture of the industrial city] ed, Hanna Imbs, *Miasto i kultura*, 22 (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1988).

⁴⁰ Wallis, *Informacja i gwar*, 169.

⁴¹ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 54-57.

however, served in order to privilege outside over local knowledge, and to wield control over city from far away – even if that city was carefully spatially drafted and resembled the “rational” city that, in theory, did not need such engineering.

As I noted in Chapter Seven, the remaking of the Old Market Square in Łódź precisely aimed at making a historic inner-city such as the one in Krakow or Warsaw. In fact, Łódź’s inner-city, because it had never been destroyed, was authentic whereas Warsaw’s was entirely fake. Yet, this was beside the point. What mattered was that allegedly Łódź “had no past,” whereas Warsaw did – only that it had to be rebuilt. That “past,” of course, was largely Jagiellon, and it was sustained by the Jagiellon spatial legacy. An architect writing for *Odgłosy* argued that Łódź lacked the elements that were “characteristic for the ambience of other Polish and European cities.”⁴² This was, however, not an absolute but a relative judgment, as we saw already in Chapter Four. When Warsaw was in debris, intellectuals who moved to Łódź were overwhelmed by Łódź’s “metropolitan” character. A certain Varsovian recalled his first days in post-war Łódź thus: “When I went out on Piotrkowska for the first time I was enchanted ... It was a beautiful Sunday morning. Piotrkowska was clean and well swept out. The loud rattling of tramways affected me deeply. It was normal metropolitan life that I had missed so much.”⁴³ But once Warsaw gradually regained its pre-war status throughout the long 1960s, the old grudges returned. Views such as these again made Łódź’s reputation: “when walking through these idiotic, long, grotesque streets, flooded by the alien and strangely unindividualized crowd ... one gets the impression that Łódź is not a city, but a nasty joke. It is the only city that one does not visit for pleasure. Those who live in Łódź must be characterized by a lot of courage: after all, living permanently in Łódź requires resilience and fortitude.”⁴⁴ The incentive was thus not to eliminate “chaos” rather than to create a new order suitable for collective consumption. That consumption, however, was organized by old class forces returning in a new guise.

When browsing the “Dictionary of the Łódź Literati,” published in *Odgłosy* between 1974 and 1976, one is struck by the fact that an overwhelming majority was not born in Łódź but largely chose to live there after the war. Some who made later on stunning national and international careers, like the painter Jerzy Nowosielski, chose to live in Łódź in the 1950s. He actually appreciated what he described as “non-intrusive” character of the city, and contrasted to Krakow where he had studied, that had a “pre-defined” (and hence inhibiting creativity) ambience. Artistic groups are a matter of the past – he told *Odgłosy*. Now everybody works in solitude – and a large anonymous city

⁴² Andrzej Szustkiewicz, “Podróż w rok 1965” [A jourey into the year 1965] *Odgłosy* 2 (1958): 2.

⁴³ Władysław Smulski, “Łódź - dobre miasto” [The good city Łódź] *Odgłosy* 49 (1967): 6.

⁴⁴ Stefan Nowakowski quoted in Jan Koprowski, “Skądżeście? Z miasta Łodzi,” in *Tranzystem przez Łódź* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1964), 352.

like Łódź gives the artist most creative freedom.⁴⁵ Living in a city that had not been so much “defined” by history and with such a historically shaped “reputation” was actually a liberating experience. Another painter agreed and noted that “Łódź is not as uptight as our capital city. It is unlike the decorated, perfumed and solemn Warsaw.”⁴⁶ In order to counter the increasing “solemnization” and neo-jagiellonization of Polish cities, Łódź’s elites made a number of attempts to place their city on Poland’s cultural map. In 1961, for example, *Odgłosy* organized a reportage contest, where Poland’s best journalists were invited to write a feature article on Łódź’s. One of them lamented: “only if it were Krakow! The old Krakow, contemplating upon a cup of coffee in the “European” restaurant. Or the young Krakow – bearded, furious, hanging out in smoky art cellars. Only if that was Gdynia’s inner-city - in the day glittering with nylon and artificial jewelry from the sailor’s ‘import’, and at night steamed up with alcohol and illegal deals. Łódź’s inner-city – I mean the people – is completely undefined. It’s irritating. Fluid and ambivalent. There are no exceptions, because there are no rules.”⁴⁷ Just as the attempt to retrofit the Old Town into a historical center failed, such attempts to upgrade Łódź’s low prestige did not succeed in the long run.

City, cinema and commodities

Cultural neo-jagiellonization

The key feature that Łódź lacked was “Europeanness.”⁴⁸ In the 1950s it was the synonym of modernization, or “metropolitanization” of urban space, and turning it into consumptive milieu. Neon lights, for example, or a cobbled street now covered with asphalt were portends of the “Europeanization” of Polish cities.⁴⁹ But it was also a word used to denote elegance – Toeplitz’s gesture, was spitefully described by *Odgłosy* (Chapter Seven) as “European.” An “European” was somebody well acquainted with high-brow culture.⁵⁰ *Odgłosy*’s columnist described Poland’s “Europeanization” (*polski*

⁴⁵ Marian Zdrojewski, “Rozmowy z plastykami – Jerzy Nowosielski” [An interview with Jerzy Nowosielski] *Odgłosy* 45 (1959): 7.

⁴⁶ Marian Zdrojewski, “Rozmowy z plastykami – ze Stanisławem Fijałkowskim” [An interview with Stanisław Fijałkowski] *Odgłosy* 42 (1959): 6.

⁴⁷ Mirosław Azembki, “Łódź czyli Heidelberg w Manchesterze” [Łódź – namely Heidelberg in Manchester] *Odgłosy* 51-52 (1961): 1, 6, 7.

⁴⁸ See also: Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), chap. 5, Kacper Poblocki, “Europe, the Pope and the Holy Left Alliance in Poland,” *Focaal. European Journal of Anthropology* 43 (2004): 123-133.

⁴⁹ Brzostek, *Za Progiem*, 158; “Piórkiem po aktualnościach” [News comments] *Odgłosy* 3 (1962): 10. This adjective was also used ironically, see: Jerzy Wilmański, “Aleksandrów – miejscowość Europejska” *Odgłosy* 28 (1958): 10.

⁵⁰ Zbigniew Chyliński (Belfer), “Tortury niepewności” [Tormenting uncertainty] *Odgłosy* 16 (1958): 2.

awans europenizacyjny) of the late 1950s slightly tongue-in-cheek.⁵¹ Paris, he argued, became “the necessary step on our route to socialism.” This is how “Poland had become an elegant country. The times when uniformity ruled supreme are long gone.” Before 1956 “everybody a-little-better-to-do travelled by tram. He never dared to call for a taxi, because this could have been noticed – nobody could stand out from the mass of the positive heroes of the age tossing in a tram.” The content of dailies changed radically after 1956: now one could read about a beauty contest, about “a duke and his spouse in a coffee house, about thieving artists and embezzlers – that is about our high life.” Even the character of the shortest news items changed. He described a story of a baker who had somebody ghostwrite for him entry exam to a university but was exposed because he wore a beard whereas the ghostwriter did not. “Some time ago,” the columnist noted, “the sanguine punch line would be this: the proletariat goes to universities!” Around 1956, he noted “the press would lament the rising crime rate among our youth. Today the beard is the punch line. What everybody noted was that nowadays our working class wears elegant and fashionable Western beards.”⁵²

“Europeanization” was therefore a sign of one’s intensive contacts with the West. I noted in Chapter Five how the Youth Festival that took place in Warsaw in 1955 revealed the “hunger” for contacts with the “outside world.” Poland’s old “regime of value,” returned in a new, urban guise, and structured struggles over collective consumption in cities. In precisely such a context the 1968 attack on “cosmopolitanism” has to be read. There was no way in which one could simply buy a Western car in Poland. Not only it cost unimaginable money, but one had to import it personally. Only people like Polański could drive around in a red convertible Mercedes. But, as one of his friends recalled, “in the 1960s we were both poor. When we went to Paris, Roman parked his car in a tenement courtyard. He did not have enough money to buy insurance, so he could not drive around. Every morning we rushed to the window to check if the car was still there.”⁵³ The quintessentially Polish “rich poverty” and the notorious “peacock-like display of wealth” (see Chapter Three) returned with vengeance.

It was not accidental that it were the people from the film industry that became the icons of the new urban consumption. Cinema continued the Romantic trend of turning urbanites into a disembodied spectators and a passive audience, submitted to the text and to the charismatic performer. This, as Sennett described, was contingent upon the centralization of cultural production and the star system in culture: “if 500 people are famous,” he noted, “no one is, and so to find someone you can call a recognizable

⁵¹ Zbigniew Chyliński (Belfer), “Rzeczniepospolita” [The uncommonwealth] *Odgłosy* 3 (1958): 2.

⁵² Zbigniew Chyliński (Belfer) “Sprawa głowy na tle nóg” [The issue of head and legs] *Odgłosy* 4 (1958):

2.

⁵³ Jacek Szczerba, “Spieprzaj do Hollywood.”

personality, a man who stands out, at least 490 must be pushed into the background.” Consequently, such “all-or-nothing” rules of the cultural game buttressed the sense “that you aren’t any good at all unless you are very special.”⁵⁴ In Poland, this had a very clear geographical dimension.

I noted in Chapter Six that the rise of the motion pictures, in both the United States and the Soviet Union, was an important tool in creating a new rescaled national identity and turning the “urban villagers” into proper nationals. Likewise in Poland, the long 1960s was the moment of the rise of increasingly popular national cinema. Not incidentally, the largest productions in the Polish film industry were historical films based upon Sienkiewicz’s novels.⁵⁵ Andrzej Wajda, the main figure in the Polish national cinema, also shot a screen adaptation of the *Promised Land*. Its main protagonist was acted by the very same actor who played the key role of the Polish romantic noble in films based on Sienkiewicz. The actor himself stressed in interviews that all these characters were actually one: “I act the very same person,” he told *Odgłosy*, “who in the seventeenth century could have been Sienkiewicz’s Kmicic and in the nineteenth century – Reymont’s Borowiecki.” Thus, Łódź’s history was jagiellonized, but, again, with a twist. “I think that Wajda’s film,” the actor continued, “will show even better than Reymont’s novel how distinct Łódź is in the Polish history. I think that this film will dignify (*nobilitować*) Łódź’s history.”⁵⁶ Not incidentally, then, Wajda’s *Promised Land* was received as fundamentally neo-romantic: “*The Promised Land* closes Wajda’s representation of the national history – the topic overriding nearly all his films. In the history of the gentry and the peasantry, and latter on of the intelligentsia, Wajda traces the truth about national history and national affairs.”⁵⁷

Through such neo-romantic motion pictures, as Anita Skwara pointed out, “the giant national education in the domain of national myths, and the knowledge of Polish cultural traditions” that was initiated during the late nineteenth century, but only with gained a truly mass reach in the long 1960s. It was a continuation of the Romantic quest to tutor the uneducated masses into the gentry-dominated history, and turn the populace into passive audience submitted to the High Art. This, Skwara noted, was actually continuation of the Stalinist elitism: what Wajda shares with socialist realism is “the aversion towards commercial art, understood as a forum of vulgarity, tawdriness and bad taste.”⁵⁸ In this sense, the neo-romantic cinema continued the Stalinist quest to

⁵⁴ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 290-291.

⁵⁵ See: Wanda Wertenstein, “Z wyobraźni na ekran” *Film* 24 (1974): 12-13, Tadeusz Sobolewski, “Jam jest Andrzej Kmicic!” *Film* 36 (1974): 6-7.

⁵⁶ Ewa Nurczyńska, “Nie było pustego roku” [There was no idle year] *Odgłosy* 17 (1974): 7.

⁵⁷ Ewa Nurczyńska, “*Ziemia obiecana* na ekranie” [The Promised Land on screen] *Odgłosy* 4 (1975): 1, 8.

⁵⁸ Anita Skwara, “Między socrealizmem a romantyzmem. O nieobecności kina masowego w Polsce” [Between socialist realism and romanticism – the absence of popular cinema in Poland] *Kino* 3 (1990): 11-12, 19-22.

substitute “commerce” for “culture,” as described in Chapter Six. Of course, it was not entirely successful – and, as we will see presently, professionalization of retail commerce was another strategy. Yet, the new central role of cultural consumption buttressed the position of those who produced culture. Antonina Kłoskowska, who studied workers’ patterns of cultural consumption in that period, shows that workers consistently complained that the high-brow culture was “too difficult” for them, but at the same time felt obliged to participate in the national ritual. An unskilled textile worker explained to her that she went to see one of Wajda’s neo-romantic films in order to “hear these important sentences that are famous” (*te ważne zdania, które są sławne*).⁵⁹

Likewise, Wajda’s *szlachta*-centered vision of Łódź’s history was entirely unrelated to Łódź’s historical experience. Not incidentally, then, the shooting of the *Promised Land* was accompanied by wry comments in the local press and even a discussion in one of the dailies on what the *real* film about Łódź should be like.⁶⁰ Łódź, trying to move away from the image of “Poland’s Manchester,” hoped to compete with other Polish cities in the production of culture, and especially the cinematic one. One of the direct consequences of the 1968 attack on the Film School was the establishment of the second film production company in Poland that was located outside of Warsaw. “Profil,” was supposed to counterbalance the neo-jagiellon Warsaw-based perspective on Poland and its history. “Nobody will convince me that Wajda, who lives in Warsaw, will make a better film about Łódź than Wajda who lives in Łódź,” wrote Andrzej Makowiecki in yet another discussion on the Film School. Profil, by being located outside of Warsaw, was to be more sensitive to local themes and local stories – and was to eschew the “Warsaw mannerism” that put the “hinterland” into the procrustean bed of “trite folklore.”⁶¹

Monopolizing vision machines

The central place of film production to the rescaling of identity was also tied to the close relation between urban space and cinematic image. As a medium film is “spatial rather than textual,” and hence represents “an urban cultural form par excellence.”⁶² As Siegfried Kracauer noted, motion pictures were crucial for the mechanization of

⁵⁹ Antonina Kłoskowska, *Socjologia kultury* (PWN: Warsaw, 1983), 468.

⁶⁰ Jan Gontal, “Wenerofobia filmowa” [The film-phobia] *Odgłosy* 15 (1974): 14; Andrzej Wajda, Barbara Pec-Ślesicka, “Listy do redakcji” [Letter to the editors] *Odgłosy* 24 (1974): 6. See also: Bogda Madej, “Filmowa Łódź – co to znaczy?” [Łódź the film city – what is this mean?] *Odgłosy* 44 (1975): 7.

⁶¹ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Bajka o polskim Hollywood” [A tale about the Polish Hollywood] *Odgłosy* 9 (1969): 1, 3.

⁶² Tony Fitzmaurice, “Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context,” in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 19.

awareness – and the incursion of science into the everyday life was also responsible for the increasing psychologization of the human experience. Science, he argued, leaves “its imprint on the minds even in provinces not directly subject to its rule. Whether we know it or not, our way of thinking and our whole attitude toward reality are conditioned by the principles from which science proceeds.” This is mainly evident in the process of abstraction: that is, stripping objects of qualities that, in Dewey’s words, “give them all their poignancy and preciousness.” Such abstraction, or what I described in Chapter Six as the rescaling of identity, “voids all kind of mental phenomena of their substance by passing them off as derivatives of psychological dispositions: ... religious beliefs are identified as expressions or symbols of man’s inborn fears and hopes ... wars are explained from irrepressible aggressiveness ... appraisals of the merits and shortcomings of our social order give place to considerations which largely revolve around the problem of whether we are adjusted or maladjusted to that order, no matter what it is like. It is all attitudes, behavior patterns, inner drives.”⁶³

Thus, as I have stressed already, our “modes of knowing” have been abstracted from place; but, and this is a Kracauer’s crucial point, they had been also reterritorialized. Cinema, as I argued in Chapter Six, is a powerful tool in annihilating place in favor of space – because it allows one to “be” in multiple places at the same time, and to experience the fundamentally fragmentary nature of contemporary world. “The multiplicity of spaces produced by these camera techniques,” argued Kern, “was augmented by editing, which made possible to shift quickly between points of view and break up spatial coherence even further.”⁶⁴ Both photography and cinema, wrote Kracauer, “not only isolate physical data but reach their climax in representing it ... Film renders visible what we did not, or perhaps even could not, see before its advent. It effectively assists us in discovering the material world with its psychophysical correspondences. We literally redeem this world from its dormant stage, its state of virtual nonexistence, by endeavoring to experience it through the camera. And we are free to experience it because we are fragmentarized. The cinema can be defined as a medium particularly equipped to promote the redemption of physical reality. Its imagery permits us, for the first time, to take away with us the objects and occurrences that comprise the flow of material life.”⁶⁵ In other words, cinematic image was fundamental in the shaping of the content of the “community of will” rather than the “community of experience” that was the major consequence of the urban and professional revolutions combined.

⁶³ Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, Princeton paperbacks (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 291-292.

⁶⁴ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), 142-143.

⁶⁵ Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 300.

Electronic media, Sennett argued, “entrenched the silence of the past” and put the idea of public life to an end by turning ever larger part of the population into a silent audience.⁶⁶ That process, however, was gradual, and not uncontested. The television set, it was believed in the 1950s, was an important machine partaking in the “scientific and technological revolution” (see Chapter Six). Because workers were to be trained and educated, it was believed that television would be a trans-local agent of urbanization – “the instrument for a general remaking of human life.”⁶⁷ It belonged to the same category as the automobile and a suburban single-family apartment with a room for each member. In this sense the television set was an integral part of suburbanization – people no longer had to travel to the inner-city in order to consume culture – now it was brought directly to them. Television was therefore believed to be quintessentially democratic, and a new medium of communication between the authorities and “the people.”⁶⁸ From the point of view of production of culture, however, the spread of television was a countermovement – that of centralization. Nowhere was this more visible than in Łódź. When a young journalist duly attacked Łódź in the Warsaw-based *Współczesność* for being a “cultural desert,” the response of Łódź pundits was unanimous: “he failed to mention television!”⁶⁹ In other words, it was hoped that cultural centralization in the realm of literature would be mitigated by a new democratic medium of television.

This might be the reason why television was not listed in the attack on *lumpenculture* (see Chapter Six). In its very beginnings, television was just like the automobile rather an elite affair. It was not really spoken of as if it were a visual medium, but rather as performative – a combination of theatre and radio. It was performed life, and most programs were made by people who had been either employed in theaters or the radio. It was still immersed largely in antebellum aesthetic, and only in the 1970s a modern “national” visual register was forged.⁷⁰ Neither was television, as it is often today,

⁶⁶ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 282.

⁶⁷ Zbigniew Chyliński (Belfer), “Nie gęba ale kasa” [It's not your face, but your wallet] *Odgłosy* 42 (1959): 1, 2.

⁶⁸ Andrzej Zawada, “Metamorfozy Kowalskiego, czyli goście mile widziani” [Transformations of Mr Smith] *Odgłosy* 13 (1960): 8.

⁶⁹ Karol Badziak, “Złote berło pomalowanej Łodzi” [The golden scepter of the repainted Łódź], *Współczesność* 3 (1960): 8. Tadeusz Papier, “Miasto to ja!” [I am the city] *Odgłosy* 6 (1960): 1, 2. Edward Etler, “Badziakowe troski,” [Badziak's concerns] reprinted in *Współczesność* 6 (1960): 11. Zbigniew Chyliński, “Myślenie ma nadal kolosalną przyszłość,” [Reasoning is the way to the future] *Głos Robotniczy* (11 February 1960), see also “Kastracje i asekuracje,” [Castrations and reservations] *Współczesność* 6 (1960): 11. Zbigniew Nienacki, “Modnisie z Piotrkowskiej” [The chic youth from Piotrkowska] *Odgłosy* 11 (1960): 1, 6.

⁷⁰ Kacper Poblocki, “The Economics of Nostalgia: Socialist Films and Capitalist Commodities in Contemporary Poland,” in *Past for the Eyes: East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums After 1989*, ed. Oksana Sarkisova and Péter Apór (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 200-202.

watched individually. In 1956, there were only 300 television sets in entire Łódź. The interest in it, however, was enormous. The Łódź Television Studio (the *LOT*) was opened on July 22, 1956, three months after Warsaw. When ten television sets were placed in major factories culture clubs (*świątlica*) and in shop windows for people to watch the very first broadcast, the crowd that gathered on Piotrkowska was so excited that the police had a hard time keeping order.⁷¹ Even in the makeshift residential districts in one of Widzew's allotments, the hunger for television was enormous. Around a hundred people permanently dwelling there collected money to buy a TV set, and paid a monthly fee for watching television in the allotment culture club. The children were particularly mesmerized by television: "it's worth seeing how overwhelmed and engrossed in watching television they are, how they literally devour the dull and fuzzy lecture on protons illustrated with chemical tables." Children's passion for protons will soon run out, *Odgłosy* warned, and suggested that adequate programming that would address worker's needs and desires is prepared.⁷²

Television's reach was still limited – programs broadcast from Łódź could be watched only in the radius of 40 kilometers from the *LOT* building. The issue of granting access to television also to non-urbanites became burning, but new technological devices were necessary. In all of Poland's major cities grassroots social committees were formed, and co-financed buying of the television equipment. The "hunger of television" was indeed enormous, and inhabitants of Tomaszów Mazowiecki, for example, sent elected representatives to Warsaw to lobby for having access to the programming.⁷³ Initially television was substantially decentralized. Between 1956 and 1958 there was no national programming, and these were, according to a Łódź critic, times of "boiling experiments," and "the best [years] in the history of the *LOT*." The *LOT* broadcast programs three days a week, including theater plays and music concerts, as well as coverage of local events and political commentaries. Until 1958, the *LOT* produced three to four theater plays a month, "something unimaginable today," she noted bitterly in 1966.⁷⁴ After a country-wide television program was launched in September 1958, the broadcasters in Łódź, Poznań and Katowice started competing for the airing time. It was centrally decided that now there would be a national division of labor in production of the programs. Since Łódź was regarded to have had a penchant for the "lighter muse," it was to become Poland's center of entertainment.⁷⁵ This, however, turned out to be more difficult than expected. Just as the hopes of democratizing and

⁷¹ Próchniak and Wróbel, *Łódź W Latach 1956-1957*, 43.

⁷² Andrzej Brycht, "Telewizja kielkuje na działkach" [Television sprouts in the allotments] *Odgłosy* 43 (1959): 1, 5.

⁷³ Wiesław Machejko [W.M.] "Jest się o co starać" [It's worth fighting for] *Odgłosy* 2 (1961): 14.

⁷⁴ Pola Wert, "10 lat łódzkiej telewizji" [Łódź's decade of television] *Odgłosy* 36 (1966): 7.

⁷⁵ Wiesław Jazdżyński, "Czy to pies czy bies" [A dog or a devil?] *Odgłosy* 4 (1958): 2, see also: Marian Piechal, "Nie róbcie z Łodzi Rypina" [Stop bashing Łódź!] *Odgłosy* 3 (1958): 6.

universalizing culture were pinned at television, it turned out that the 1960s was a period of gradual yet firm centralization of cultural production.

Marginalization of the local broadcasters *vis-à-vis* Warsaw was gradual. First it was a matter of the staff: four radio and one television station in Warsaw employed 2,700 state-funded people (*etat*), whereas the remaining fourteen radio and television stations outside of the capital employed only 1,900 people.⁷⁶ Commissioning of television programs to people employed in local cultural institutions was also difficult. Certain Ł.G. gave an informed insiders' view on how this worked: all programming decisions, also relating to programs produced outside of Warsaw, were taken in the capital. As a result, medium-ranked Warsaw administrative official had more to say than the head of the Łódź Studio for example. If a program was produced in Łódź, but it was never aired, its author would not receive a penny, and even the costs of production were not covered. This was unique for television, since both radio and theater would pay at least 50% of the agreed sum in case the commissioned work was not aired. Television programs produced in Łódź were adaptations of works commissioned for radio or cabarets. Royalties paid by television were significantly lower than those paid by radio and theater. Television typically signed no contracts, and hence many satire authors, of which many actually lived in Łódź and worked for one of the two country-wide satirical weeklies, the *Karuzela*, were hesitant to write for television. This policy was intended, as Ł.G. bitterly concluded, to “get rid of the nuisances” (*pozbyć się natrętów*) and encourage centralization of the culture industry.⁷⁷

The problem was, as Sennett observed, that centralism was intrinsic to the “star system.” Hardly anybody could compete with the entertainment program produced in Warsaw, because places like Łódź had no “recognized TV personalities” (*wylansowane postaci*). “If we do nothing in that domain,” *Odgłosy* warned in 1961, “Warsaw will soon beat us in the domain of entertainment too.”⁷⁸ Every Saturday, the Łódź station aired life concerts of nationally-renown artists that gradually evolved into the program *Muzyka lekka, łatwa i przyjemna* [The Light, Easy and Pleasant Music] hosted by the Warsaw *compère* Lucjan Kydryński.⁷⁹ It was a national hit, yet none of its stars were local; “Łódź has its own Kydryński,” complained a disenchanted reader (and viewer) in a letter to *Odgłosy*. “It’s A. Królikowski, who is renown for his radio programs, but he is never on television.” On television, “we have only Kydryński, Santor, Rolka [Warsaw artists] and others, over and over.” Even Ciuksza's Orchestra was never aired

⁷⁶ Andrzej Zawada, “Metamorfozy Kowalskiego, czyli goście mile widziani.”

⁷⁷ Ł.G., “O czym warto wiedzieć stawiając żądania telewizji” [What you should know when negotiating with television] *Odgłosy* 11 (1961): 10.

⁷⁸ Jerzy Panasewicz, “Postać, czyli jeszcze jedna szansa telewizji” [Television personalities and our chances] *Odgłosy* 6 (1961): 6.

⁷⁹ Pola Wert, “10 lat łódzkiej telewizji.”

on television, although “it’s the only one in Poland, and it has many fans all over the country.”⁸⁰ As we saw in Chapter Six, not only was Ciuksza sacked but it was also quickly replaced in the city life by a “reknown Warsaw operetta soloist” who ran a karaoke-like show in Łódź’s parks.

A city of high-rise

As electricity before, television was in the vanguard of the cultural enlightenment of the masses. Not accidentally, now the ŁOT was placed in Łódź’s very first high-rise, resembling Warsaw’s Palace of Culture and Science as well as Moscow’s Palace of the Soviets – only without Lenin’s statue on its top.⁸¹ Such celebration of height was a consequence of the cultural impact of aviation. There was, Kern argued, “one universal directional shift that came about with the airplane. Its cultural impact was ultimately defined by deeply rooted values associated with the up-down axis. Low suggest immorality, vulgarity, poverty, and deceit. High is the direction of growth and hope, the source of light, the heavenly abode of angels and gods. From Ovid to Shelley the soaring bird was a symbol of freedom.”⁸² The high-rise became the symbol of Łódź’s brighter future but also an attempt to counter-balance Łódź’s increasing marginalization within Poland. Its authorities decided to rebuild the inner-city, and by doing so turn Łódź into a “metropolis” – “a city of high-rise, fast communication, and apartment blocks.”⁸³ The inner-city, the authorities alarmed in 1968, was both ageing and depopulating. Those areas on its fringe (such as Włoda Bytomska) have been already used. Therefore, new suburban areas were to be built on empty fields, mainly along the East-West axis, and not, as before, along the North-South axis. Such a move was also intended to deprive Piotrkowska of its monopoly within Łódź for being the “only European part of Łódź” and the only part of the city that could be deemed *reprezentacyjny* – i.e. worth showing to outsiders.⁸⁴

In order to mitigate the “brain drain” to Warsaw, Łódź’s authorities decided to build *Łodzkie City* – a central district of office buildings, large shopping centers, and residential high-rise.⁸⁵ Initially it was to comprise two major parts – the first alone alongside the Fabryczny Train Station (a one-way train route leading only to Warsaw)

⁸⁰ “Listy widzów” [Letters from viewers] *Odgłosy* 23 (1962): 11.

⁸¹ Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000), 174-148.

⁸² Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, 242.

⁸³ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Sposób na miasto” [A method for the city] *Odgłosy* 27 (1968): 5.

⁸⁴ Włodzimierz Łuszczkiewicz and Marek Wawrzykiewicz, “Ulica w deszcz” [A rainy street] *Odgłosy* 37 (1960): 2, 8.

⁸⁵ “Architektura – interes społeczny” [Architecture is the social weal] *Odgłosy* 2 (1968): 1, 3; Jan Bąbiński, “Gniazdo ptaka nie wyżywi” [A nest alone will not feed the bird] *Odgłosy* 22 (1976): 7.

and the ŁOT building. The other was to be at the very intersection of the North-South and East-West axis.⁸⁶ Also there, a residential high-rise district, known to this very day as *Łódzki Manhattan*, was designed for young professionals and “artists who studied and worked in Łódź – who had to be given comfortable dwelling conditions so they do not leave the city.” Competition for apartments in *Łódzki Manhattan* was enormous, so not only people from the culture industry, but also architects medical practitioners and the like mobilized their “pull” in order to solicit an apartment there.⁸⁷ It gradually replaced Włada Bytomska as the location of Łódź’s *crème de la crème* – and like in Włada Bytomska some working-class people moved in there too, so there was yet another “mixing of milieus” (with the intelligentsia in numerical majority by a safe margin). As a result, both culture and commerce was somehow decentralized within Łódź’s inner-city. Not only Piotrkowska, wrote Makowiecki already in 1969, was *reprezentacyjna*. Other places in Łódź became equally presentable and elegant, and European enough so Łodzianie did not have to be ashamed of it. He enumerated the *reprezentacyjny* objects: “*Europa* restaurant on the Kościuszko Avenue, a stylish bookstore right next it, the Grand Theater on Dąbrowskiego Square, adjacent to a Concert Hall and the television building. On the other side of the town, there was a highly *reprezentacyjny* modern department store *Uniwersal* and a number of *reprezentacyjny* coffee houses scattered around.”⁸⁸

The *Łódzkie City*, a journalist explained, “was not only the high-rise where a number of central trading enterprises (*centrala handlowa*), offices and enterprises are to be located. In between the high-rises, on their sides and in front of them, there will be restaurants, department stores, cafes, fashion houses, florist’s shops, wine cellars – even a night club. The large catering outlet (*kombinat gastronomiczny*) will be able to service 1200 consumers at a time. The new *Łódzkie City* will give 10,000 jobs.”⁸⁹ The first center around the Fabryczny Train Station, except for a new hotel and underground passage, was never completed.⁹⁰ The old Główna street, at the junction of Piotrkowska, was on the other hand turned into a four-lane motorway linking the new apartment projects in Widzew (east) and Retkinia (west) throughout the center. The Główna street, *Odgłosy* argued, was “Łódź’s major obstacle on its way to modernity.” It used to be Łódź’s main street, but the building of the train connection to Warsaw (and the Fabryczna station) marginalized it. It was a commercial street, but it had “none of Piotrkowska’s cosmopolitan splendor.” It was a typical street of petty traders and

⁸⁶ Julian Brysz, “Wizja śródmieścia” [A vision of the inner-city] *Odgłosy* 6 (1965): 1, 3.

⁸⁷ Inga Kuźma, “Badania etnograficzne na łódzkim ‘Manhattanie’: wprowadzenie,” *Journal of Urban Ethnology* 9 (2008): 5-12.

⁸⁸ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Czy będziemy metropolią,” [Will Łódź become a metropolis?] *Odgłosy* 41 (1969): 7.

⁸⁹ Jan Bąbiński, “Narodziny centrum” *Odgłosy* 24 (1970): 1, 4.

⁹⁰ It very center was supposed to be inside the Sienkiewicza, Tuwima, Kilińskiego and Traugutta streets.

artisans, Łódź's major concentration of shoemakers, and the embodiment of the "dirty, worm-eaten, ramshackle Łódź."⁹¹ Except for Bałuty, Główna had been the only place in Łódź constituting "a hotbed of cutthroats and prostitutes, thugs and knifers, pimps and pickpockets – a veritable jungle of evil and misdeed, a kingdom of daredevils, gangs and gallows birds." Its built environment "glittered with the rich displays in widow shops, glued to the small, ground-floor houses. It lived and breathed the gold rush and profit chasing. Dirty, ugly, yet rich, nouveau riche, parvenu, it was dripping with atrocious richness."⁹² Its clearance was as essential to the elimination of capitalism as the proto-gentrification and renewal of Bałuty.

This was the final blow to the "excluded economy" and the petty capitalist landscape of post-war cities. It started, as we saw in Chapter Four, with the Battle Over Trade and nationalization of private retail commerce. Throughout the long 1960s there was an attempt to "professionalize" retail. In 1958, street vending and unsolicited trade were outlawed, but peddlers were still visible on the streets. Many still came from the countryside. A journalist actually followed in 1960 peddling babushkas on the Fabryczny train station. To his surprise, two men walking on the platform worked as professional blackmailers – the *szmalcownik*. This highly pejorative word was coined during the World War Two to denote people who made fortunes by blackmailing hiding Jews or Poles who protected Jews. The two men managed to squeeze 20 złoty from each peddler, despite the fact that the women were committing no crime – transport of goods was not illegal. All of them were behaving as if the war never ended. *Odgłosy* attributed the lingering on of the blackmailer "profession" to peddlers' ignorance. But it was also partially blamed on Łódź's state-ran retail: peasant women traded in agricultural merchandise in Łódź; in the city they bought discounted wares and sold them in the countryside. Unlike such women, "our tradesmen have little knowledge of what goods are in demand and where. Hawkers, of which a vast majority is illiterate, know this very well." Thus, *Odgłosy* postulated sarcastically, "our trading institutions should employ illiterate experts on rural and small-town consumer demand ... I am confident that as a result less there will be fewer clearances in Łódź, and the profitability of our trade would increase sharply."⁹³ Gradually, street peddling disappeared. In 1966, *Odgłosy* reported that "nowadays only a miracle-worker can buy fruit from peasants and sell it in Łódź with a good profit; if he or she is not caught by the bazaar supervisors, then they are eliminated by the competition. If they are caught by the police, they run into trouble". Another offspring of the "excluded economy" the *ręczniak* – namely somebody trading from their hands or pockets – disappeared too. This trick worked only with lemons – but many ended up in court anyway.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Julian Brysz, "Główniej ma nie być" [Główna street is to be no more] *Odgłosy* 3 (1967): 4, 5.

⁹² Karol Badziak, "Główna – nie główna" [Główna street is not the main one] *Odgłosy* 2 (1961): 5.

⁹³ Bogusław Holub, "Pielgrzym z kontrabandą" [Bootlegging pilgrim] *Odgłosy* 29 (1960): 5.

⁹⁴ Andrzej Makowiecki, "Jakie piękne targowisko" [What a beautiful bazaar] *Odgłosy* 1 (1967): 5.

Such removal of the “excluded economy” from the streets did not mean that it disappeared. Rather, it moved “inside” – and by doing so it became a “new past time of the nation establishing itself materially.” I noted in Chapter Seven that the importance of extra incomes was exacerbated by the increasingly even distribution of salaries. The 1960s opened new opportunities for making easy cash – tourism. Just as in the 1970s and the 1980s Poles travelled abroad largely for private holidays, in the 1960s, when passports and travel permits were more difficult to obtain, one travelled abroad mainly on business trips. This is how certain professions – like working for “foreign trade companies” that were the link between Poland’s industry and the outside world – became enormously lucrative. Because “economic tourism” became highly popular, in early autumn, *Odgłosy* reported, as people return from holidays, “many of Łódź’s offices metamorphose into garment stores”⁹⁵ – as I noted in Chapter Seven, clothes, except for meat, were crucial for the distinction between the poor and well-to-do families. A journalist in 1961 who went for a trip to Czechoslovakia organized by one of Łódź’s enterprises, noted ironically: “the Polish psyche has changed so radically! Not so long ago trading in goods (*handelek*) was not considered overly respectable, and for that reason part of the population [the Jews] was excluded from co-ruling the country for centuries.” Now it was all different. A bilateral agreement between Poland and Czechoslovakia allowed for carrying over the border meat (up to 2 kilograms), chocolate (up to half a kilogram), alcohol (up to quarter of liter) and cigarettes (200 pieces). Although it was supposed to be a trip to the mountains, nobody was interested in nature sightseeing. “All people do here is multiply and divide,” he continued, and of course they try to smuggle more than was allowed; when one man was caught red-handed he insisted that the liter of vodka he carried was needed for the treatment of his child’s sore ears.⁹⁶

Smuggling methods were often very creative, as already described in Chapter Four. It was worth the trouble: profits made were indeed spectacular. For an Italian pullover bought in Vienna for the equivalent of 250 złoty, a journalist calculated, one could get in a second-hand store in Łódź, the *komis*, up to 1200 złoty. If the average salary in 1962 was 1680 złoty, and if one could, as the author “confessed,” hide up to a hundred pullovers one’s automobile, then the game was indeed worth the candle – or actually much more.⁹⁷ In 1965, for example, over half million Poles went abroad – of which only 150,000 thousand as tourist (mainly to the socialist countries), and the rest went on business trips (and largely to the West).⁹⁸ As a result, second hand stores were in 1960s

⁹⁵ Jan Bąbiński, “Komis nisko się kłania” [*Komis at your service*] *Odgłosy* 30 (1967): 10.

⁹⁶ Krzysztof Pogorzałek, “Rycerze zielonej ścieżki” [Knights crossing the border] *Odgłosy* 41 (1961): 1, 7.

⁹⁷ Piotr Goszczyński, “Wyznanie przemytnika doskonałego” [A confession of the invincible smuggler] *Odgłosy* 39 (1962): 4.

⁹⁸ Krzysztof Pogorzałek, “Cywilizacja wypoczynku” [The leisure civilization] *Odgłosy* 18 (1967): 4, 5.

Poland something unimaginable in the West – a place where one could find the most exquisite goods. It was mainly supplied by “economic tourists” who in most cases did not breach the law but only brought some “gifts” and thus obtained extra cash. “Here comes one of my best suppliers,” described owner of Łódź’s best known *komis* to *Odgłosy*. “The foreign trade enterprise he works for sends him for business trips. He holds a briefcase full of garment, looks around and compares prices. He will not tell anybody that during his monthly stay in Paris, he walked everywhere, only to save on public transport; that he never went to cinema or a restaurant, that he even did not eat dinners, only brewed tea and ate the ridiculously cheap bananas, living in some third-rate motel. His health deteriorated as a result, but he saved some money, and could buy some clothes on a flea market. Look, he’s coming now, and will open his briefcase and tell me: ‘Hi, I brought some items on sale – the best Parisian sort’. Year, right – he thinks I can be duped –I know where he got all these things from.”⁹⁹

Urbanization of the excluded economy

Commodity-centric socialism

As Susan Buck-Morss argued, the American “commodity culture” became an ideological issue only thought the 1950s, with the advent of the Cold War.¹⁰⁰ But the deep-seated contexts of the class-forming role of competitive conspicuous consumption was also important. The response of the authorities to this expansion of the excluded economy was, just as before, directed at taming the phenomenon they could not halt. If people could buy similar Western-styled items at official state-owned stores, the reasoning went, then the second-hand stores would lose their privileged status and enormous profits. While soon after the war, *Odgłosy* noted, “we were happy if the industry was producing at all,” now quality of products had to be improved. The elements of “market socialism” introduced after 1956 were, amongst other things, intended to do that. Łódź, as the center of both textile and apparel production, had a special role to play. In 1960 a number of enterprises were given a special legal status of “leading enterprises” which gave them significant autonomy. They were to be the bellwether of the move towards a commodity-oriented economy. Wólczanka, whose “exodus” to small towns I described in Chapter Five was one. It had to move its production outside of Łódź precisely because the high labor turnover in Łódź did not allow for enough labor discipline necessary for raising the quality of production.

⁹⁹ Jan Babiński, “Komis nisko się kłania.” See also: Marian Zdrojewski, “Powroty” [Returns] *Odgłosy* 40 (1963): 1, 4, Janina Rząsa-Adynowska, “Pod znakiem kremu Nivea” [Cursed by the Nivea lotion] *Odgłosy* 40 (1966): 4.

¹⁰⁰ Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, 202.

Further, because space in the inner-city was becoming increasingly scarce, many of the technological changes were easier to implement on a “virgin” territory.

Before a man’s coat manufacturer Próchnik became another bellwether enterprise, only within four years it underwent a major transformation (*niepowtarzalny przełom*) from dire straits to becoming an “apparel tycoon.” Certain Dutkiewicz, a workers' representative, recalled: “back in 1961 every client was like gold, and thousand employees faced a treat of redundancies. It became blatantly clear that if no one wants to buy one's products, then the whole production is good-for-nothing.” So “we created our own design office, with our own designers and modelers, and we organized an efficient system of transferring models onto the assembly line. We introduced new specialist machinery ... diversified our offer, and created different designs for Poland and for abroad. But above all, we understood that we need to make fundamental changes as far as the system of production is concerned. It became blatantly clear to everybody that the assembly line system, that used to be an enormous technological improvement as compared to the old handicraft system, does not do the job any longer (*nie zdaje egzaminu*). Reality demanded that we introduce a new system, far more perfect, where single workstations would specialize in working specific elements of the coat. In this way we wanted to increase the diversification of our models, bolster the control of particular stages of the production process, and ultimately achieve higher quality.” As a result, the various workstations were synchronized in a “direct-line” production system.

At the same time, accounting was reformed. No longer was the value of raw materials the basis for the calculated retail price of the finished product. Now “work put into the cutting, sewing, and finishing of the coat” became its chief components. Although Próchnik still was located in the old mills in the inner-city, nearly the whole machinery was replaced. Initially, this lowered the productivity and hence workers' wages. But the new machines also brought “changes in the human psyche and their relationship to the object of labor. Now the point was to produce a given unit in minimum time, and keep up the high quality... People realized they have to train themselves. They signed up for courses.” Soon Próchnik was “out of the woods,” and since “appetite comes with eating,” they started thinking of producing for export. It started with a humble attempt to sell 50 coats to Canada. In 1962, Próchnik was sending coats to Libya, Yemen, and Ethiopia, from 1964 it started exporting to United Kingdom, Canada and Tanganyika, and from 1965 also to Lebanon, Afghanistan, Jordan, Guinea, and Island. Reorienting the factory for exports “was not only a national necessity but also crucial for our factory. In order to keep up high level of quality, and keep up our staff's ambitions high,

we had to, as I was being told, create new stimuli. It was precisely the export that became such a new driving force.”¹⁰¹

Timing of this article was not accidental. It was published in the year that marked the “turning point”¹⁰² for the Soviet-block economies. Experiences of companies such as Próchnik, and the hope that production of exports will become a “stimulus” for the Polish economy lead to the Fourth Party Plenum in 27-28 July 1965.¹⁰³ This Plenum gave a completely novel role to foreign exchange: expanding exports was supposed not only to bring hard currency revenues, but also to restructure the domestic economy. Selected companies, such as Wólczanka or Próchnik (that in 1965 exported already 25% of its production), would compete with Western enterprises on the world market. This competition was to restructure the domestic economy too: the “bellwether companies” were to show the way forward to others, and ensured increased quality of production. Poland joined GATT in 1967 on the condition that it would allow minimal imports fixed at 7 % annually.¹⁰⁴ Opening to world markets would engender a form of a feedback mechanism (*coś w rodzaju sprzężenia zwrotnego*) between the domestic and world economy, as the head of Łódź's foreign trade corporation explained, and this would become the powerhouse of the transition to commodity-centered socialism.

“Importing commodities forces one to confront them with domestically produced goods” he explained. “It pushes our enterprises to a continuous improvement of production quality, introducing new products lines, improving technological processes, introducing technological innovations, lowering of own costs, etc. This energetic drive towards competitiveness (*dążenie do konkurencyjności*) of our industry influences our exports too.”¹⁰⁵ Another foreign exchange expert working for the leather industry explained how this was supposed to work: “abroad, girls aged between 17 and 19 wear coats made of rabbit skins. The more diversified the skins the better. These are mini-coats, cheap, light, and slightly extravagant. Our industry was quick to respond (*wykazał refleks*), producing just as the demand arose (*produkując na bieżąco*) and exploited to the fullest our production capacities that actually did not satisfy the

¹⁰¹ Feliks Bąbol, “Od depresji do standardu światowego” [From depression to the world class standards] *Odgłosy* 40 (1965): 2.

¹⁰² Włodzimierz Brus, “1966 to 1975: normalization to conflict”, in *The economic history of Eastern Europe, 1919-1975, Vol. III*, eds. Michael Charles Kaser and Edward Albert Radice, 139-140 (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1986).

¹⁰³ IV Plenum KC PZPR, 27-28 lipca 1965 r.: *kierunki zmian w systemie planowania i zarządzania gospodarką narodową w latach 1966-1970* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1965). For a discussion on the Plenum's consequences see: “Trudna droga do nowoczesności” [The difficult pathway to modernity] *Odgłosy* 12 (1970): 1, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Zdzisław Rurarz, *Byłem doradcą Gierka* [I was an advisor to Gierek] (Warszawa: Andy Grafik, 1990), 29-35.

¹⁰⁵ “Made in Poland” *Odgłosy* 29 (1969) 2, 4.

international demand. Naturally, not every industry is able to adjust so fast.” The industry that he spoke on behalf of was classified as one of the niches that had a potential for global competition (*branże rozwojowe*). “Nevertheless,” he concluded, “we should exploit to the fullest such capabilities in every economic domain where it is possible. One of the most important prerequisites for commercial success is the ability to adapt fast and to be resourceful (*szybkość i operatywność*).¹⁰⁶

As a result, Polish goods were supposed to climb up the ladder of added value. In June 1966, The Central Office of Quality and Measures (*Centralny Urząd Jakości i Miar*) was founded. The Office of Quality Mark was one of its daughter institutions. It was responsible for granting, but also auditing quality marks. By September 1969, already 848 manufacturers were allowed to give “First class” (1) or “World class” (Q) quality signs to over 10,000 products. Próchnik and Wólczanka were amongst the first ones to get the “Q” mark. The competition was tough: only one-fifth of the applicants got through, and in a number of cases quality marks were taken back.¹⁰⁷ This was one of the mechanism of introducing quality control. Another innovation were that the “control cells” (*komórka kontrolna*) in existing enterprises were reformed. Now instead of supervising and “technological audit” they moved to “quality audit” (*kontrola jakości*). “The broadly understood self-control by each of the employees is the basis for the new quality audit. What is most important is that quality control starts already in the phase of preparation of the raw materials and prototypes. Quality control will encompass the whole production process, and then the conditions of warehousing, transport and usage – i.e. things that so far has escaped the field of vision of “technological audit”¹⁰⁸ At the same time, trade mark awareness became salient: just as Polish apparel was exported initially, to the United Kingdom for example, under the label “Foreign,” soon this changed into “Made in Poland,” and this is how Poland, also as a brand, entered the global commodity market.¹⁰⁹

Chamstwo and bureaucratic venality

Próchnik became certainly one of Łódź’s *reprezentacyjny* enterprise, but setting the entire economy on that track was a rather steep order. A more general turn towards an “export-led growth” came in the 1970s, and was backed by massive loans in petrodollars that the Polish government took and hoped to pay back with commodities (often produced on Western licenses) exported back to the West. Yet, already in 1976

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Q’ – inaczej konflikt czasu” [Quality sign and the time struggles] *Odgłosy* 45 (1969): 9.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Włodzimierz Stokowski, “Z Łodzi na cały świat” [Exporting from Łódź to the whole world] *Odgłosy* 20 (1967): 1, 4, 5.

Poland faced a liquidity crisis, only to be bailed out by the Soviet Union.¹¹⁰ This “overheating” or “growth fatigue,” as the economist Kazimierz Poznański dubbed it, was of a regional character. Only in Poland, however, it led to a major social unrest – the *Solidarność* movement – and an unprecedented debacle of practically the entire state. The roots of that crisis were, therefore, internal, and tied to the way economic growth, and “getting established materially,” was increasingly unevenly distributed.¹¹¹ Although the “dynamic” 1970s (when a two-digit economic growth was seriously anticipated) are typically contrasted by economic historians to the “stagnant” 1960s, and the 1970s leader Edward Gierek – the “generous father” – is usually contrasted to the 1960s leader Gomułka – the “stingy mother” – Poland started taking Western loans only in 1973. Many of the 1970s investments had been blueprinted and prepared before, and there is more continuation than rupture. The net outcome of this did however, “set the path for years to come,” as Poznański pointed out, and constituted an “important stage in Poland’s reconstruction of an open – we stress, open – market-type economy.”¹¹²

The typical contrast between the 1960s “uncouth socialism” (*siermiężny*)¹¹³ and 1970s “consumer socialism” stems from the overly literal interpretation of the official “party line” that defined what counted as the “right attitude.”¹¹⁴ This, as I have already suggested, was subject to fast revisions, and was increasingly detached from the social reality. Just as “being immune to Zionist propaganda” was expected in March 1968, already three years later one’s “commitment to the shaping of socialist inter-human relations” became the hallmark of the “party-speak.” The Gdańsk shipyard and Łódź textile workers jointly resisted the raising of meat prices in December 1970 and February 1971. Gierek, who then rose to power, came personally to Łódź to discuss the workers’ concerns, and promised that the new government would focus on aiding the poorest, the laboring women, the largest families (*rodziny wielodzietne*), and people unable to work (*renciści*).¹¹⁵ As we saw already in Chapter Seven, the new “technocratic” future, buttressed by the “scientific and technological revolution,” was based upon silencing of the urban pasts. Staszeczek, the ungrateful seamstress’ son, was part of the cohort of the young “technocrats” who did not remember personally the

¹¹⁰ Simatupang, *The Polish Economic Crisis*, 17.

¹¹¹ Kazimierz Poznański, *Poland's Protracted Transition: Institutional Change And Economic Growth 1970-1994*, 98 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 57.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹³ Zdzisław Zblewski, *Abecadło PeeReLu*, 2nd ed. (Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 2008).

¹¹⁴ The notion of uncouth socialism was coined in 1981 by Mieczysław F. Rakowski.

¹¹⁵ “Doniosłe decyzje” [Path-breaking decisions] *Odgłosy* 1 (1971): 1, 2.

antebellum capitalist crisis, the war, or even Stalinism, and hence “had entirely different life experiences and expectations than their parents had had.”¹¹⁶

As we shall see in Chapter Nine, *Solidarność* was a struggle to control the nascent social polarization, uneven distribution of privileges, and the venality of the state apparatus. Meat was back on the agenda – and its rationing was introduced by authorities as result of grassroots’ pressure.¹¹⁷ Very similar themes echoed during the March 1968 events – the problem of urban collective consumption and the moral double bookkeeping remained unsolved, or even were exacerbated. As Warsaw moved closer to Europe, it also drifted away from the rest of Poland. The attack on *Warszawka* and the cosmopolitans during the March events has to be read in that context. The 1960s saw a number of economic scandals, which stirred up both the mass media and popular imagination. The most contentious was the “meat scandal” of 1964, in which over four hundred individual were arrested, and some were sentenced for partaking in a mafia-like structure that pocketed money from the meat trade. The head of Warsaw’s municipal meat trading department was accused of taking bribes from store managers for the sum of 3.5 million zloty, sentenced to death and executed. What seemed in hindsight a harsh decision actually correspond to the popular “double moral bookkeeping” – cries for uncompromising treatment of “economic criminals” were as widespread as small-scale thieving – both at work (like in the Buczka case described in Chapter Four), and in the newly opened self-serving department stores and groceries.

A dozen of smaller and larger “economic scandals” erupted in Poland of the 1960s. In 1966, for example, a major international scam was uncovered. Three employees of the foreign trading companies from Łódź were accused of corrupting a representative of a Western corporation that was selling artificial dyes to Polish factories. They opened a Swiss bank account where they had the “commission” sent to, or even asked to have female apparel sent to them, and they sold it to a *komis*. They developed a complicated structure of contacts and intermediaries that they called “their family” and even used a secret code (mafia-style) in their correspondence.¹¹⁸ Deriving private profits from having professional access to the West was done without violating or even straining the law. In 1962, for example, artificial fiber started being produced in Widzew. Technology was purchased from the British firm Courtaulds. Because production required a very stringent adherence to the complicated formula, the original contract stipulated that Polish workers would be sent to Britain for training. Indeed, between

¹¹⁶ T. Iván Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery*, Cambridge studies in modern economic history 1 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 251-253.

¹¹⁷ Kurczewski, *The Resurrection of Rights in Poland*, 310-311.

¹¹⁸ Bolesław Żarnicki, “Mali ludzie do wielkich interesów” [Petty people and big business] *Odgłosy* 16 (1966): 1, 4.

1962 and 1965 42 people went to Coventry, England. The journalist, who saw the list of trainees, was astonished: “it were only people employed by the industrial associations, research institutes and central laboratories. Nobody who would actually be working at the production process. Each visit lasted a week on average. If you subtract the arrival, departure, and weekend, each visit lasted only a few days.”

What he implied is that it was long enough for “economic tourism” but too short to learn the nuts and bolts of production. As a result, Polish factory producing viscose had to use trial and error methods rather than the English “know-how” for their new production. And this was the reason behind the poor quality of their produce.¹¹⁹ This issue came back in 1971, when the change of regime opened a Pandora’s box of discontents. Workers in Olimpia paid from their own money to translate an English-language manual of the new machinery, because they did not know how to operate them, and their salaries were dependent on their productivity. When some Englishmen came over to Olimpia to set up some new machinery, Polish workers took them out after work for vodka only to “steal some production secrets from them.” Of course some Poles from Olimpia were sent for training to Britain, but these were only managerial cadre that had nothing to do with actual production.¹²⁰

Such privatization of public assets and increasing corruption of public officials was the leitmotif of 1960s criticism of socialism. A year before the “March events,” a major “restaurant scandal” shook Łódź. It exposed the failure of the authorities to eliminate the “excluded economy” by urbanization-cum-professionalization. Altogether 50 state employees working in the catering and restaurant sectors in Łódź were put on trial and charged for “paid favoritism” (*płatna protekcja*). 24 of the 50 were actually chief managers of Łódź’s restaurants (out of the total of 40). They partook in a “pyramid” of paid favoritism, wherein rank-and-file restaurant employees would pay their managers a fee for tolerating swindles, and restaurant managers in turn paid higher officials (including those working in supervisory structures) to keep the system going. Just as with the “meat scandal” money stolen in restaurants was enormous. Illicit profits were made by putting to practice an old dictum well theorized by Witold Kula – if one cannot change manipulate a price of a certain good, then one can accumulate by cheating on the measure.¹²¹ Over fifty percent of coffees sold in Łódź’s restaurants, according to an audit from 1964 by the National Retail Inspectorate (*Państwowa Inspekcja Handlu*) were made from only half of the coffee powder officially prescribed. In other words, instead of one the staff actually made two coffees – but officially sold only one, and

¹¹⁹ Jan Bąbiński, “Garb na Widzewie” [Widzew’s hunchback] *Odgłosy* 35 (1966): 2; see a reply from one of the engineers: Jerzy Kossakowski, “Listy do redakcji” [Letter to the editors] *Odgłosy* 1 (1967): 3, and the journalist’s conclusion: Jan Bąbiński, “Gra w anilane” [The anilana game] *Odgłosy* 6 (1967): 4, 5.

¹²⁰ Andrzej Makowiecki, “W żywe oczy” [No beating around the bush] *Odgłosy* 30 (1971): 3.

¹²¹ Witold Kula, *Measures and Men* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

pocketed the money for the other. This is how, the Inspectorate calculated, over half a million złoty evaporated to private pockets. The same was done with vodka – it was diluted with water, or the waiters sold their “private” vodka in restaurants – for much higher prices. It was estimated that a single waiter could earn up to a 100 złoty per table in this way – and usually every waiter served around 8 tables daily. Money thus made was then distributed amongst various members of the “pyramid.”¹²²

This encroaching of the excluded economy was the reason for the expanding urban *chamstwo*. Waiters, for example, were notorious for their ill-treatment of customers. “If you want to spend less than a 100 złoty,” *Odgłosy* reported, “then do not even enter a restaurant. Waiters would take only those orders that include vodka” – because on vodka they made private profits. As a result, even official sales on vodka amounted to one-third of turnover of Łódź’s restaurants. Restaurants gradually started resembling “barns” (*stodoły*) and not places of leisure, as a journalist complained. Both turnover and competition for tables increased. One was expected to “drop by, drink a bottle of vodka in half an hour, and make way for the waiting clients” – those lined up in the hall. A reader of *Odgłosy*, reacting to the restaurant scandal, described a recent incident in a restaurant “not to revenge for the *chamstwo* I have experienced but in order to provide further evidence and to draw general conclusions for the public good.” He ordered tea in a restaurant, but it was not served. When asked for the Complaint Book (standard fitting in socialist stores and restaurants), the waiter, who turned out to be drunk, refused. The reader made a row, and manager’s served him tea and apologized. The waiter refused to follow suit and started calling him names, and even threw a knife at him – hurting readers’ calf. The latter insisted he is given the Complaint Book, but was being sent from one staff member to another. Finally the entire crew assembled in the corridor, headed by a gray-haired chief, whom the reader assumed to be the head of restaurants’ Workers’ Council, declared once and for all that the Complaint Book will not be delivered.¹²³

It was just one of the many similar voiced against the ensuing *chamstwo* of administration. Calls for a retributive action were the most typical conclusion. How widespread such sentiments were – and how unfair the purges of “crooks” could become – may be attested by a comment by Bolesław Lesman, a Łódź journalist, on the restaurant scandal. “In Poland we have one of the meekest penal codes in the world. It was impossible to prove that the accused added water to vodka, and hence she was sentenced to 6 months in jail suspended for two years. And precisely thanks to her shady dealings she managed to build herself a six-room detached house in one of Łódź’s nicest suburbs.”¹²⁴ Only a year later Lesman was accused of Zionism and forced

¹²² Feliks Bąbol, “Pięćdziesięciu śmiałych” [The fifty bold people] *Odgłosy* 23 (1965): 4, 5.

¹²³ Feliks Buchner, “Listy do redakcji” [Letter to the editors] *Odgłosy* 27 (1967): 2.

¹²⁴ Bolesław Lesman, “Gastronomiczna karuzela” [The catering craze] *Odgłosy* 23 (1967): 4, 5.

to emigrate – and the rhetoric used against him was nearly identical to that surrounding the “restaurant scandal.” Calls for a firmer action against embezzlements and for “extraordinary measures” resulted from the failure of previous attempts to curb swindling. Before 1967, there were three major audits in Łódź’s catering and restaurant sector, but only some “small fry” was sacked. The vetting committee members were in fact part of the “pyramid.” Demoralization in restaurant and catering sectors (as well as retail) were often attributed to the fact that these were not considered “respectable profession” but rather something comparable to small-scale peddling – a source of extra incomes. This is why labor turnover was enormous in that sector: 33 percent annually. After 1956, the city made a serious attempt to turn retail from “mere mechanism of goods distribution” into a professional “service to the community.” Phenomena “hitherto unheard of such as customer service or market research appeared. This is how we started moving a system based upon the priority of the supplier and producer into a market of the consumer.” Yet, the technological innovations such as self-serving stores (*samy*) were not enough: the newly professionally trained cadre, graduates of the catering high-school, was blocked in their careers by the “pyramid” – and their purging in 1967 eliminated the obstacle, *Odgłosy* reported, to full professionalization of the excluded economy.¹²⁵

Epistemic rescaling

Such a judgment was, of course, premature. Problems with public catering and restaurants did not disappear in the 1970s and 1980s – but the “economic scandals” did. Was the excluded economy therefore eliminated from the state institutions? Not quite. What changed was the public sphere – what I described as urban rescaling, and what I will describe in more detail in Chapter Nine as “economic rescaling” brought invariably what can be dubbed “epistemic rescaling.” As Simon Schaffer showed in his compelling analysis of Charles Babbage “geography of intelligence,” changes in the way urban space is lived and experienced are accompanied by changes in the ways of knowing, and ultimately in epistemic “machinery.”¹²⁶ Likewise, the centralization of vision and television was ultimately linked to “seeing like a high-rise” and the rise of a schism between grassroots (common sense) and bureaucratic rationality. It was especially in the period between 1971 and 1973 when the press exploded from narratives criticizing the nearly-Kafkian way in which large institutions now worked. It was back then when the trope of “quotidian absurdities of socialism” was first coined –

¹²⁵ Felisk Bąbol, “Vis gastronomica” [On catering] *Odgłosy* 42 (1967): 1,3.

¹²⁶ Simon Schaffer, “Babbage’s Intelligence: Calculating Engines and the Factory System,” *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 1 (Autumn 1994): 203-227.

in which individual struggles and even goodwill proved helpless in confrontation with the ruthless bureaucratic machine.¹²⁷

Already in 1964 Aleksander Wallis argued that “the building of large multi-storey apartments blocks deprived most people of the opportunity to have a direct influence on the way their street looked like. Contemporary architecture had destroyed the hitherto smooth transition between the street, house façade and the interior of apartments. Even the unsightly nineteenth century tenements often tell us more about their inhabitants than contemporary apartment blocks.”¹²⁸ The improvement that post-war urbanization of Poland brought was experienced as a catastrophe because it brought a significant disempowerment. It generated what James Fergusson dubbed “vertical topography of power” – i.e. the conviction that power is somewhere “up there” far away from the life-world of the rank-and-file.¹²⁹ It is not only an academic fallacy (as Fergusson argued) but a popular experience. Wallis noted the widespread working-class fear of living higher than the fourth storey and attributed it to Poles’ “ruralized” urban consciousness.¹³⁰ Soon after the war, however, vertical urban expansion was considered a hope rather than a threat. Just as a pre-Haussmannian city had been vertically stratified (i.e. the higher one lived in a tenement the poorer one was), horizontal stratification, or the division of the city into “better” and “worse” areas, became the hallmark of nineteenth century capitalism. It had a number of consequences, including the scarcity of land. Vertical rather than horizontal urban expansion, it was held, would allow using space between the high-rise as natural amenities, and hence would give more light, better air and living conditions.¹³¹ The building of high-rise was to become the cure for the Haussmanized cities.

It was also to be an anti-centralizing and democratizing move. It was, in fact, precisely the opposite. Just as most of Łódź’s inhabitants openly claimed that not a single worker lived in Włada Bytomska, they too doubted that the new *Łodzkie City* was built for their well-being. *Odgłosy* cited an overheard conversation of two by-passers looking at the construction of yet another sky-scraper: “they will never give an apartment to a simple worker (*robociarz*) there,” a fifty something man looked up and sighed. Although his interlocutor pointed out that this was going to be an office building, he insisted: “well,

¹²⁷ Poblöcki, “The economics of nostalgia.” See also: Jerzy Urbankiewicz, “Myślałem że to kompot” [I thought this was a compote] *Odgłosy* 4 (1968): 4, 5.

¹²⁸ Aleksander Wallis, “Socjologia miasta a planowanie urbanistyczne” *Studia Socjologiczne* 2 (1964): 221.

¹²⁹ James Fergusson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2006), 90-93.

¹³⁰ Wallis, *Informacja I Gwar*, 51.

¹³¹ Jerzy Kochanowski, ed., “Balast przeszłości usunęła wojna... Rok 1945: trzy pomysły na odbudowę Warszawy,” in *Zbudować Warszawę Piękną...: O Nowy Krajobraz Stolicy (1944-1956)*, W Krainie PRL (Warszawa: Trio, 2003), 21.

an artful office dodger would still be able to get a four room apartment in there.”¹³² But the problem of centrality is not, as I have stressed, only a matter of place. It is rather a question of space. Potentially, Łódź had a historic inner-city that could have been turned into a space of consumption. Likewise, its high-rise could have been anti-centralizing if not for the larger centralism of space – the rescaling of both cities and the economy. The issue of seeing like a high-rise was an issue of speed, mobility and centralisation. The man who claimed that workers will never be given an apartment “up there” remained on the ground. As Wallis emphasized, just as knowledge of the old city (wherein most people walked) was obtained from personal experience, the “identity” of the rescaled city was increasingly forged in motion – by people looking at it from buses and trams, for example, as well as by mass media. The *Łódzkie City* was a symbol of precisely that shift.

The “identity crisis” I noted in Chapter Six accompanying Poland’s third moment of material expansion became fully manifest in the 1970s. “We have come to a point beyond which the classics of Marxism-Leninism had to stop their reflections,” an intellectual argued. “As futurologists they were unable to go any further. And now the question what to do with that system, how to develop it, has to be answered.”¹³³ The ideology that gradually displaced Marxism was that of the “scientific and technological revolution.” Already in the 1960s Marxism was becoming increasingly an “empty signifier.” An internal party instruction on how to appoint chief executives in the economy read: “every manager, no matter if a Party member or not, ought to be a Communist *in the broadest sense*.”¹³⁴ As I have already argued, “the right attitude” was increasingly central. It was even institutionalized in the 1970s: the textile industry introduced a new financial bonus rewarding attitudes.¹³⁵ But increasingly more, the “right attitude” boiled down to “speaking right” and not acting upon it. 1970s was a decade, Andrzej Makowiecki argued, of “verbal careers.”¹³⁶ Edward Gierek spend most of his time traveling around the country and cutting ribbons at numerous investments and large industrial sites. His visits had often a Potemkin quality – allegedly even cows were washed with shampoo before his arrival. As he was from Silesia and not Warsaw, it was believed that Warszawka had been set away from power. Quite the opposite – the real power was wielded by the Prime Minister Jaroszewicz, who had climbed all the

¹³² Tadeusz Żakowiecki, “Drapacz chmur?” [A sky-scraper?] *Odgłosy* 4 (1967): 1, 3.

¹³³ Quoted in Maria Hirszowicz, “Intelligentsia versus Bureaucracy? The Revival of a Myth in Poland.” *Soviet Studies* 30, No. 3 (1978): 357.

¹³⁴ In Maciej Tyimiński, *PZPR I Przedsiębiorstwo: Nadzór Partyjny Nad Zakładami Przemysłowymi 1956-1970*, W Krainie PRL (Warszawa: Trio, 2001), 80, emphasis mine.

¹³⁵ Wiesław Puś, *Dzieje Łódzkich Zakładów Przemysłu Bawełnianego Im. Obrońców Pokoju “Uniontex” (d[awnych] Zjednoczonych Zakładów K. Scheiblera I L. Grohmana) W Latach 1827-1977* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1979), 434.

¹³⁶ Andrzej Makowiecki, *Pięćdziesiąt melonów* [Fifty grand] (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Przygoda, 1990), 28-29.

rungs of central administration and knew it in and out. But he remained far away from the spotlights, only exacerbating the “secretive” image of power.¹³⁷

The 1970s was a period of silent rehabilitation of Socialist realism, but with a visual twist. It was based upon “scientific Leninism,” comprising four elements: scientific character, party-mindedness, truthfulness, and concreteness.¹³⁸ The scientific character of propaganda was assured by both expert knowledge (newspapers started printing, for example, analyses by the new echelon of political scientists, imbued with jargon which's meaning was rather difficult to unravel), and increasing dominance of *images* of workers in the mass media. The “gray walls” of Łódź's inner-city became the material for such visual expansion of ideological and commercial propaganda, and were covered with murals. The crucial difference between the Stalinist and the 1970s aesthetics was that the latter hinged upon visual propaganda that was increasingly engendered by allegedly objective mechanization of awareness, or machine vision. An element of the future centralizing epistemology was “invented” during the Renaissance: “the convention of the perspective,” argued John Berger “centers everything in the eye of the beholder. It is like a beam from a lighthouse – only instead of travelling outward, appearances travel in. The conventions called those appearances reality. Perspective makes the single eye the center of the visible world. Everything converges on the eye as the vanishing point of infinity. The visible world is arranged for the spectator as the universe was once thought to be arranged for God.”¹³⁹ Nineteenth century rise of objectivity, and the attempts to render a “view from somewhere,” argued Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, continued that by aiding the human eye with prosthetic vision machines. Of course, images “untouched by human hands” were preferable over drawings or engravings, and this is how photography became the scientists' favorite medium for rendering perspectives untainted by human subjectivity.¹⁴⁰ Aviation and motion pictures brought this a step further.

Television was the key instrument for mass “calibration of the eye”¹⁴¹ and rendering images “from nowhere.” The favorite footage of the 1970s “propaganda of success” is an aerial panorama of a large industrial plant.¹⁴² This was a popularization of what during World War One was described as “airmindedness.”¹⁴³ In the Soviet Union, aviation was “popular craze of the 1920s that fed into [Soviet] science fiction.” Fascination with aeronautics remained immense ever since, and the dynamo of progress

¹³⁷ Zdzisław Rurarz, *Byłem doradcą Gierka*, 48-57, 67, 69-70, 71-76.

¹³⁸ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Jaka będzie przyszłość?” [What will be the future like?] *Odgłosy* 41 (1975): 10.

¹³⁹ Quoted in: Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 254.

¹⁴⁰ Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 42-43.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁴² For example see Bonawentura Szredel, *Plac budowy* [Construction site] (Łódź: WFO, 1976).

¹⁴³ Peter Fritzsche, “Machine Dreams: Airmindedness and the Reinvention of Germany,” *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 3 (June 1, 1993): 685.

was fuelled by “the fear of not flying, of remaining earthbound and thus immobile.”¹⁴⁴ The aerial view, usually shot from a helicopter, was the most popular representation of the material changes brought by the 1970s. The very same journalist who climbed a high-rise to praise the new vistas it offered, argued that taking a helicopter tour around the city of Łódź gives new insights that are not visible from the ground: “all that is hidden for the human eye, will be visible from the helicopter” (*Co jest ukryte przed ludzkim okiem, nie ujdzie helikopterowi*). “We have been misled. Our eyes were fixed on the [Włada Bytomska and the like], and the shanty suburban houses (*budo-chalupy*) have used that moment of inattention” and forged a “ring of ugliness” around Łódź inner-city. This is why he advocated that Łódź’s city planners go for a helicopter tour, and use that information to combat the ramshackle suburban housing, and promote only the “right” form of suburbanization.¹⁴⁵ Yet, an aerial view was rather used for praising the reality rather than criticizing it. We see this very clearly in the use of aerial footage in Andrzej Wajda’s *Man of Marble* – to show how former defiant worker activist was “bought in” by the system, Wajda takes the film’s main protagonist on a helicopter tour around the plant that the worker was promoted to be the director of.

Of course, taking a helicopter tour was not open to everybody. “A few days ago I watched on national television a program about Łódź. A journalist came from Warsaw, armed with a camera and a helicopter, and shot a wonderful documentary.”¹⁴⁶ Local journalists were given such opportunity only once a year: since 1973, the Łódź Party Committee organized “aerial reconnaissance for journalists” (*zwiad lotniczo-dziennikarski*) that likewise produced “wonderful” articles printed alongside aerial photographs of the city.¹⁴⁷ The 1970s “cinema of moral concern,” that Kieślowski’s work was a prime example of, was criticizing the “absence of life 'as it is' on Polish screens.”¹⁴⁸ Paradoxically, many Łódź journalists whom I have interviewed in 2009 argued that the 1970s were the heyday of journalism in Poland – but just as reportage of the 1960s is ripe with clues on the life of the city, *Odgłosy* between 1973 and 1980 are rather useless for clues of life “on the ground.” The aerial trips organized for journalists were very popular – it was thanks to them, as the journalist Adam Lewaszkiewicz recalled, that he had finally realized Łódź was indeed a different city.

The 1970s “propaganda of success” stood in the stark contrast to the critical public culture of the 1960s. This change is, in my view, largely responsible for the “Polish crisis.” As a professional group Polish journalists considered themselves to be a “loyal

¹⁴⁴ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 170.

¹⁴⁵ Jan Bąbiński, “Helikopter dla Łodzi” [A choppter for Łódź] *Odgłosy* 47 (1965): 1, 4.

¹⁴⁶ Jerzy Wawrzak, “Jutro tworzymy dzisiaj” [Today we are making tomorrow] *Odgłosy* 46 (1975): 3.

¹⁴⁷ See for example Wiesław Machejko, “Navigare necesse est...” *Odgłosy* 22 (1977): 8, Mirosław Kuźniak, “Na ziemi i w powietrzu” [On the ground and in the air] *Odgłosy* 22 (1977): 9.

¹⁴⁸ Marek Haltof, *Polish National Cinema* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 146-148.

opposition party” and the “ombudsman for the society.”¹⁴⁹ But grassroots critique in the public sphere was becoming increasingly pointless. Authorities, seeing like a high-rise, were “detached” and disinterested. A small but telling incident from Spring 1971 is a case in point. A local clinic dismissed Marian Borchardt – a technician manufacturing contact lenses from polished glass. He was the only person in whole Poland who could make them. Back then, lenses were worn for only a number of hours daily by people who, for medical reasons, were unable to wear glasses. Understandably, Borchardt had an extensive network of clients and co-operators from medical schools, hospitals, and clinics all over the country. Because he was not a practitioner, he was not allowed to prescribe lenses, he only made them, and, if necessary, assisted with their use. This is where the uneasy relationship to practitioners in the clinic he was officially employed originated from. Officially Borchardt was sacked because his attitude was “selfish and anti-social” (*antyspołeczna postawa*) – he did not want to give up his own private practice.” “I’ve been independent my whole life” Borchardt explained to the journalist, “and I’ve been independent in my work. And now I’m too old to start learning how to obey a boss.” Once Borchardt was officially sacked, he was not allowed to manufacture any more lenses. *Odgłosy* published only a short note about it, this soon triggered an avalanche of letters from both outraged commentators and Borchardt’s clients. The bone of contention was the fact that Borchardt took for himself half of the charge on the contact lenses,¹⁵⁰ and the remaining half was cashed by the clinic. It seems the decision to sack him was intended to “soften him,” but the ardent criticism in the mass media certainly surprised the authorities.

Official responses followed, yet these were elusive, and essentially dodged the problem, feigned compassion and blamed it all on an institution that was not their own. Instead of re-employing Borchardt, who could for the time being serve the national demand for such lenses, authorities gave elusive promises to send twenty people to Czechoslovakia for training, so they learn how to make such lenses. For many of both old and prospective clients of Borchardt, the situation was dramatic, for they suddenly lost their ability to see or were deprived of their hope to do so. The battle to restore Borchardt to his job, waged by *Odgłosy*, lasted for nearly a year, and failed miserably. One of the readers wrote: “We expect from practitioners to be exceptionally sensitive for human suffering, and not to exhibit bureaucratism, nonchalance and disrespect.” Karol Badziak concluded the battle: “It’s been seven months since Marian Borchardt stopped making

¹⁴⁹ Jane Leftwich Curry, “Polish journalists in the policy-making process,” in *Background to Crisis: Policy and Politics in Gierek’s Poland*, eds. Maurice D. Simon and Roger E. Kanet, 177-178 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981).

¹⁵⁰ Karol Badziak, “Optyk i zaćma” [An optician and cataract] *Odgłosy* 20 (1971): 5, “W sprawie krytyki prasowej” [Regarding the media critique] *Odgłosy* 26 (1971): 3, “Sprawy szkieł kontaktowych ciąg dalszy” [The contact lenses affair continued] *Odgłosy* 28 (1971): 1, “Raz jeszcze o szkiełach kontaktowych” [Once more on contact lenses] *Odgłosy* 29 (1971): 3.

contact lenses, and three months since *Odgłosy* published the very first article about that. And so what? Nothing! The people who are directly or indirectly responsible for such state of affairs, have only demonstrated their complacency. It'd like to be in such high spirits as they are. Letters from the readers, on the other hand, revealed the patients' tragedy. Alas, except for expressing my most sincere compassion, I can do nothing to help them. It turns out that we are all powerless when faced with active indifference of the people employed in high administrative positions in the state and public health system. Our criticism had only consolidated them; they have integrated and attacked in close-order one person – Marian Borchardt. And they won. They can be proud of themselves. I really did not anticipate that.”¹⁵¹

Neither did the authorizes anticipate that nearly the entire nation would “walk out on socialism” in 1980. The “scientific and technological revolution,” and the “view from above” reached its apex in 1978. Now authorities could claim that they not only “saw like a high-rise,” or “saw like a state” – but they reached as high as possible. The first Pole, Mirosław Hermaszewski, went to outer space. The year 1978, a journalist reported, was a breakthrough in the expansion into the outer space. But it had an important revolutionary aspect on epistemology. The expanding science of “remote sensing” (*teledetekcja*) allowed for scanning the surface of the Earth for information that can could be collected only from the vantage point in the outer space.¹⁵² It had an important prestigious aspect: Poland became the “four country in outer-space club” and it was a success of the entire nation and its scientific community.¹⁵³ Together with Hermaszewski a number of things went to outerspace: the Polish flag and coat-of-arms, the photograph of Edward Gierek (and Brezniew), soil from the wartime ruined Warsaw, a pocket edition of the Communist Manifesto and Poland’s new constitution and little flags of major institutions and associations. It was in many ways the peak of the scientific and technological revolution in Poland - but also a moment of national euphoria and the technocrats’ biggest success perhaps. Quickly Hermaszewski became a real celebrity. He was the first Polish cosmonaut but at the time he did not think he would be the last one.¹⁵⁴ In historiography this moment was to be overshadowed by another unprecedented success of a Pole – only three months after Hermaszewski’s flight, Karol Wojtyła became the very first Pole at the Holy See – hence climbed even higher than Hermaszewski.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Karold Badziak, “O szklach kontaktowych aż do skutku” [Writing on contact lenses until victory] *Odgłosy* 32 (1971): 2.

¹⁵² Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Kosmos” [The outerspace] *Odgłosy* 29 (1978): 1, 2.

¹⁵³ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Nauka w kosmosie” [Science in the outer space] *Odgłosy* 28 (1978): 2.

¹⁵⁴ Włodzimierz Kalicki, “27 VI 1978: Po twarózkę do gwiazd” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (27 June 2002): 2, Mirosław Hermaszewski “Polak z Sojuza” (interview by Włodzimierz Kalicki) *Gazeta Wyborcza* (23 June 2008): 2.

¹⁵⁵ See also: Asif A. Siddiqi, “Imagining the Cosmos: Utopians, Mystics, and the Popular Culture of Spaceflight in Revolutionary Russia,” *Osiris* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 260-288.

It has been argued that the fact that an anti-communist Pole became the Catholic Pope, and his 1979 visit to Poland was the “midwife” for Solidarity since “it provided a new cultural foundation for national self-identification and the organizational experience for mobilizing it.”¹⁵⁶ Before 1979, many argued, Poles existed in a state of “social anomie,” i.e. lived a “private life” by identifying only with their family and with an abstract yet impersonal nation. The mezzo-level civil society emerged thanks to the experience of mass rallies “self-organized” for the papal pilgrimage. I argued in Chapter Six that this purified or rescaled identity was actually the product of Poland’s urbanization. Just as before Polish intellectuals lamented the “anonymous crowd,” suddenly in 1980 this crowd became “conscious” and “mature.” The Catholic Church, Kennedy argued, filled in an epistemic lacuna engendered by the 1970s “success propaganda” – living socialism was increasingly considered “living in a lie,” and the Church – as an institution making truth-claims – offered a new vision of welding together words and deeds that became increasingly attractive alternative to the “empty signifier” of Marxism-Leninism. Now both the Church and the Nation “became a living truth when they were resurrected in the Pope’s person,” and Communism “was pushed even further from meaningfulness in the Polish life-world, becoming even more an alien power system.” This is how “truth” was “resurrected as the central feature of class struggle” in state socialism,¹⁵⁷ and the two groups, or even the “two nations,” clashed in 1980.

¹⁵⁶ Michael D Kennedy, *Professionals, Power, and Solidarity in Poland: A Critical Sociology of Soviet-Type Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 43, for a critique of a Pope-centric genesis of Solidarity see: Poblocki, “Europe, the Pope and the Holy Left Alliance in Poland.”

¹⁵⁷ Michael D Kennedy, *Professionals, Power, and Solidarity in Poland: A Critical Sociology of Soviet-Type Society*, *Soviet and East European studies* 79 (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 44.



Photograph Twelve –Financialization of everyday life in Bałuty

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THE EVIL CITY

Ryszard Kapuściński, one of Poland's best known reportage writers, spent most of the 1960s and 1970s travelling around and writing about Africa and Latin America. When in the summer of 1980 the editor of *Kultura* asked if he wanted to visit striking cities on the Polish coast, Kapuściński, as he himself recalled, sensed straight away that something of truly global significance was taking place in Gdańsk, Gdynia and Elbląg. He reported: "a new kind of morality ruled supreme in those cities. Nobody drunk, nobody made brawls, nobody woke up struck by the debilitating hangover. The crime rate fell to zero, mutual aggression died out, people became friendly, helpful and open to one another." Although this unprecedented bonhomie in the way Poles related to each other in public space was mainly thanks to the young industrial workers, "thoughtful, intelligent, and conscious of their role in society," Kapuściński described also a group of women working for a small co-operative who came to the Gdańsk shipyard to join the strike. "They did not demand higher wages, or a new kindergarten. They were determined to strike against their chief manager, who was a *cham*. All the efforts directed at teaching him kindness and respect for them – the mothers and the women – ended up tragically in harassment and persecution. In vain they appealed to the higher authorities – the manager was safe, because he had always made sure the plan was fulfilled." It was that small determined group that captured for Kapuściński the spirit of *Solidarność*: "gauged against the momentousness of the Gdańsk postulates, the motives behind these five women's strike may seem of secondary importance. There is so much ravaging *chamstwo* around! But the young shipyard workers listened to their complaint with absolute compassion. They

too were struggling against bureaucracy overrunning the economy, against contempt, against the stop-talking-and-start-working attitude, against the lifeless face on the other side of counter that only says the indifferent ‘no’. Those, who reduce the *Solidarność* movement to material claims, miss the point entirely.”¹

Jumping scales over Łódź

Against flat ontologies

To take Kapuściński’s advice and not to miss his point, but to actually follow it entirely, we have to move away from Gdańsk. It was thanks to *Solidarność* that the Gdańsk shipyard workers became known internationally as the bellwether of the Polish proletariat. Very few knew, however, that this was a relatively new role for them and that, seen from a different geographical vantage point, *Solidarność* – one of the most famous social movements in contemporary history – was actually rather weak on solidarity. Until 1980, the Polish working class was usually “located” either in Silesia or in Łódź. During all the major political furor in Poland, starting with the 1945-1947 strikes, through the “thaw” of 1956 and the “March events” of 1968, to the toppling of the post-1956 regime in 1970-1971, Łódź remained an important political player. The fact that *Solidarność* was spearheaded by Gdańsk and not Łódź was not as obvious back in 1980 as it may seem in hindsight. The sociologist Jacek Kurczewski argued that it was Gdańsk’s relative marginalization on Poland’s ideological map, as well as the unfulfilled aspiration of its young and well educated workers, that lay the foundation for *Solidarność*. It was not “a rebellion of people in despair,” he insisted, but rather a “revolution of those whose hopes remained unfulfilled,” and a project of class formation.² It was an expression of the “new middle class” whose claims on upward social mobility were being blocked by the red-tape *nomenklatura*, and who felt they were legitimized to start running the country without the Communists.³

Solidarność was, therefore, a class alliance between certain groups of relatively marginalized intellectuals and the upper stratum of the working-class. In this, it had an important geographical dimension: it was thanks to the arrival of Warsaw intellectuals in the Gdańsk shipyard (as “advisors”) that the movement quickly gained *national* significance. In other words, Gdańsk workers managed to “jump scales,” to use Neil Smith’s notion, thanks to this class alliance. “Scale jumping” is a process of political mobilization in which a particular struggle is reconceptualized as a struggle pertaining to a higher scalar order – when for example one argues that anti-gentrification protest is

¹ Ryszard Kapuściński, “Notatki z wybrzeża” [Notes from the coast], *Kultura* 37 (1980): 1, emphasis original.

² Kurczewski, *The Resurrection of Rights in Poland*, 10.

³ *Ibid.*, 15, 117-118, 131.

not only about a single street or a neighborhood, but about the entire city.⁴ Gdańsk workers jumped that scalar hierarchy very fast – by the end of August 1980, what was going on behind the gated Gdańsk shipyard was considered of international or even universal importance – universalism being the ultimate scalar jump. Although both the notion of “jumping scales” and Smith’s nested scalar ontology have been criticized for being overly hierarchical,⁵ when we perceive jumping scales as class alliances, then we realize that such a scalar ontology is not overly hierarchical but actually not hierarchical enough. In other words, jumping scales in real political struggle is an exception rather than the rule and an extremely steep order. We see this when we analyze why the workers in Łódź did *not* manage to jump scales in 1980 the way the Gdańsk shipyard workers did.

Not only the spatiality but also temporality of *Solidarność* was important. While Gdańsk shipyard workers were negotiating their postulates with the Polish government, the future neoliberal elites enjoyed their first victories on the other side of the Iron Curtain. There are many elective affinities between the movements for the “third way” in both East and West. Not accidentally, both Thatcher and Reagan (who rose to power in 1979 and 1981 respectively) remain, against all odds, glorified by both the post-*Solidarność* and post-Communist elites in Poland to this very day. The eventful period between 1979-1981, as I have argued in Chapter Eight with regard to the Soviet bloc, and as both Harvey and Arrighi argued with regard to the West, were only political manifestations of the social and economic changes that occurred during the long 1960s. It was then, and especially between 1968 and 1973, when a major shift of power occurred. It was a moment of “intensified multinationalization (almost amounting to capital flight) ... as both U.S. corporations and non-U.S. corporations try to establish world-wide market positions and protect themselves from the challenges of each other.”⁶

There was also a steady rise in real wages throughout the 1950s and 1960s – but in the abovementioned period, there was a “pay explosion,” when wages rose much faster than labor productivity. Overaccumulation of capital, in relation to rigid and unchanging supplies of labor and raw materials, was the main cause of the crisis. “Injection of purchasing power in the world economy, instead of resulting in the growth of world trade and production as it had done in the 1950s and 1960s, resulted [after 1968] in world-wide costs inflation and in a massive flight of capital to offshore money

⁴ Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1991), 174-175.

⁵ Sallie A Marston, John Paul Jones III, and Keith Woodward, “Human geography without scale,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, no. 4 (2005): 418.

⁶ Hymer and Rowthorn in: Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London: Verso, 1994), 304.

markets.”⁷ Now “control over world liquidity began to shift back from public to private hands and from Washington to London and New York.”⁸ It was only after the outbreak of the Polish crisis that the U.S. got back on the track of world supremacy, and the turn from material to financial expansion gave America its *belle époque*.⁹

Double polarization

I have argued in Chapter One for a spatially-sensitive analysis of the social changes underpinning phases of both material and financial expansion. Despite the generally acknowledged “retreat from class,” class-based analysis is not obsolete for moments of financial expansion, where the spatial underpinnings of capitalism are not restricted to the relations of production. Just as I argued against the notion of a “dual city,” here I also argue against analysis of *Solidarność* in terms of “two nations” – the ten million members of *Solidarność* and the *nomenklatura*.¹⁰ Instead I suggest to focus on the interplay within what Jonathan Friedman dubbed “double polarization” – vertical and horizontal. It is a metaphor that is intended to sharpen Arrighi’s model of historical capitalism and capture the social inequalities lurking behind the shift in the spatial epicenter of the world economy as well as a transition from material to financial expansion.¹¹ “Horizontal polarization” refers to the increasing rift between various world locations, withering away of nation-states, decline of “modernist” forms of identity in favor of various essentialisms and “rooted” forms of identity. Vertical polarization, on the other hand, describes the growing chasm between the elites and “the people” within single polities.¹²

One of the net results of both vertical and horizontal fragmentation combined is the emergence of increasingly cosmopolitan elite across the entire globe. Both forms of polarization can be seen as rescaling shifts. The changing balance of power between the capitalist and socialist blocs, and the fact that the period between 1980 and 2009 was for the latter a protracted “lost decade” whereas the West enjoyed its moment of glory, points to horizontal polarization at the largest scale. But within single polities such as Poland we can find examples of horizontal polarization too: such as the growing

⁷ Ibid., 305.

⁸ Ibid., 308.

⁹ Ibid., 299.

¹⁰ See: Norman Davies, *The heart of Europe*, 44-62, Kennedy, *Professionals, Power, and Solidarity in Poland*, 140-142.

¹¹ Jonathan Friedman, “Concretizing the continuity argument in global systems analysis,” in *World System History: The Social Science of Long-Term Change*, ed. Robert Allen Denmark et al. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 133-152.

¹² Jonathan Friedman, “Globalization, Dis-integration, Re-organization. The transformations of Violence,” in *Globalization, the State, and Violence*, ed. Jonathan Friedman (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 1-34.

distance between Warsaw and the hinterland – and especially Łódź. The rise of *Warszawka*, the virulent attack on it in 1968, the rising tide of illiberalism and anti-Semitism are all elements in that whole. The increasing isolation of Łódź triggered a wave of ‘reinvention’ of ‘rooted’ forms of identity. Today, youth living in Łódź’s inner-city ‘enclaves of poverty,’ distinguishes itself from those living on other streets by calling them Jews (*pejsy*). The slung of Łódź’s indigent youth, as the sociologist Piotr Bielski argued, has little to do with their hostility against real Jews or the state of Israel. Thirteen year old girls, when they wish to describe something as ‘crap’ they call it *pejsowy* – i.e. peyes-ish, peyes being the word for Hassidic sideburns. Boys, who are divided by allegiances to two of Łódź’s football clubs, call their competitors the Jews. One day, Bielski wrote, a group of boys darted to the cultural center he runs on one of Łódź’s poorest streets, and exclaimed ‘let us hide, the Jews came over, they peyessed (*zapejsować*) the entire Wschodnia street.’ He asked them, pretending not to understand, what does ‘to peyes’ mean. ‘Well, the Jews from the Pomorska street came over,’ they explained, ‘they beat up the boys from the Włokiennicza street, smeared their Jewish slogans [logos of the other football team], we escaped by miracle.’ ‘So you call them Jews,’ Bielski answered, ‘and how to they call you?’ ‘Also the Jews.’ So, Bielski concluded, ‘in his way you are all Jews!’¹³ Such ‘anti-Semitism,’ I have argued in Chapter Four, has very little to do with pre-war prejudices and is more ‘willed’ than ‘experienced.’ Speaking of inventing traditions, or new rooted forms of identity, makes sense only after describing the process of anterior ‘uprooting,’ or what I have described as ‘rescaling of identity’ in Chapter Six. Although its effects can be found in a place, the entire process unfolded in a larger space – and the field of power enveloped in class relations.

I have argued in this study that Poland’s urbanization – the third moment of its ‘material expansion’ – unfolded against the backdrop of pre-existing social structures, and have been largely structured by class forces engendered by Poland’s merchant feudalism. I have described how since World War Two Poland’s elites and the rank-and-file have moved both closer and drifted away from each other. The ‘chaos’ of the immediate post-war years, and the unprecedented proximity (also physical) between both groups was the major stimulus for the suburbanization movement. This was the context behind Włada Bytomska. Yet, once more and more people moved in to apartment blocks, then single family houses became increasingly fashionable. The very first attack on apartment blocks came already in 1968 – and not surprisingly the lack of ‘privacy’ (and noise) was described as its major shortcoming. Likewise, when

¹³ Piotr Bielski, ‘Korona nad ŁKS-em. Studium celów życiowych i wartości młodzieży z podwórek śródmiejskich kamienic Łodzi.’ [A crown over the Łódź Sport Club] in: Danuta Walczak-Duraj (ed.), *Wartości i postawy młodzieży polskiej* (Łódź: Uniwersytet Łódzki, 2008): 311-318, Piotr Bielski ‘Dzieci z ulicy Wschodniej’ [The kids from Wschodnia street, interview by Krzysztof Kowalewicz and Jakub Wiewiórski], *Gazeta Wyborcza* (8 May 2009): 10.

automobiles started becoming more accessible, suddenly yachting came up as the latest and most fashionable form of leisure. In other words, forms of class separation were constantly being reinvented. And it was the major motor behind what Neil Smith dubbed “seesawing of uneven development” – the perpetual movement back and forth between the city center and its periphery. Movement towards the center (chapters Four and Five) were counterbalanced by suburbanization (Chapter Six and Seven) and this was followed by recentralization (Chapter Eight). But also the frontier of separation was constantly shifting – and was attained not solely by building material barriers. The problem of centrality (and by extension of marginality) is primarily a problem of space rather than place, as I argued in Chapter Eight. Therefore during Poland’s (and Łódź’s) period of stagnation, lasting between 1980 and 2003, when very little new investments into the built environment were made (and those that were made did not alter existing structures), very important shifts in social relations occurred. A very powerful shift in space occurred without remaking place – and hence Łódź’s return to its “venture capitalist” origins, and new forms of accumulation based upon financialization of bodies – that in many ways outstripped the *Zong* massacre that I started this study with.

Defeat of Solidarity

Although the “origins of our times” are to be found in the period of 1968-1973, the significance of 1980-1981, at least in the Polish case, is that the political structure that coalesced back then survived more or less to this very day. At the time, of course, this was not as clear as it may be today. This is why except for travelling to Gdańsk in August 1980, some Warsaw intellectuals did expect at least some rumblings of discontents in Łódź. Jarosław Kaczyński, one of Poland’s “terrible twins,” and back then a young and inexperienced intellectual looking for entry points into dissident politics, travelled to Gdańsk but was not let inside the shipyard. Then he decided to drop by to Łódź on his way back. “I spend both nights on the train,” he recalled, “but I came to Łódź too late. Nobody was striking there, except for the public transport.”¹⁴ This was not entirely true. Just as in 1971, strikes in Łódź were triggered by news from the coast,¹⁵ likewise in 1980 Łódź’s largest cotton mill, Marchlewski, went on strike on the 26th of August, simultaneously with the public transport. Generally between August 5th and 31st, there was a large number of shorter and longer strikes in many of Łódź’s enterprises. All of them, however, were performed in utmost isolation. Even if Kaczyński wanted to stay in Łódź, he would not have been let in – strikers in Łódź did not allow for outside “advisors” because they wanted to demonstrate the power holders their class integrity and unity (*zwarcie*).

¹⁴ Michał Karnowski, Piotr Zaremba, *O dwóch takich... Alfabet braci Kaczyńskich* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M., 2006), 107.

¹⁵ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Głuche krosna” [The silent looms] *Ogłosy* 9 (1981): 1, 3.

Although we now know nearly every detail of what took place in the Gdańsk shipyard back then, this knowledge was not available to the contemporaries. The striking workers in Łódź hardly knew what was going on in the factories next-door, let alone those on the Polish coast. Striking women, interviewed by two sociologists, had only a vague idea of the Gdańsk postulates (“they want some new trade unions”), but they explained that “if they are striking, and if the government is talking to them, then they must be right.”¹⁶ There was only a handful of leaflets (prepared by outsiders) in Łódź, encouraging workers to go on strike and instructing them how to go about doing it. They were anyway insignificant: Łódź’s working class tradition dictated what was to be done. For example striking committees were formed only after 48 hours, because in 1971 the government’s rhetoric made a clear distinction between a stoppage (*przystój*) and a strike, and hence recognized only strikes that lasted longer than 48 hours. Likewise, striking workers occupied the shop floor for two shifts, and not for one (that they worked for) – and this was a method, widely practiced during the 1945/6 strikes, of making sure that fellow workers do not break out. The mass media did not cover what was going on in Gdańsk, only broadcasted elusive official statements such as “Poland needs internal peace for amicable cooperation of all patriots,” and similar messages to “calm down” voiced by the highest Catholic authorities. Only on August 31st people in Łódź, and everywhere else in Poland, saw for the first time Lech Wałęsa – the man who shook the Politburo and the Cabinet – signing an agreement with the new government.¹⁷

Just as in 1971 events in Łódź were of national significance, attested by the fact that the Prime Minister and the First Secretary came over and talked to textile workers, from 1980 onwards Łódź’s politics became increasingly perceived as “local quarrels” – a liability rather than an asset for politics at the national, let alone global, scale. When Jarosław Kaczyński returned to Łódź in 1989, ordered by Lech Wałęsa to marshal local *Solidarność* groups for a country-wide *Solidarność*-based political party, Kaczyński recalled his attempts to mediate between the quarrelsome activists in Łódź as:

a nightmare. I saw a very poor city, with Stars of David painted all over the *Solidarność* office. The union leaders were being chopped and changed. Activists would backbite one another, and some had even been convicted for criminal offences. I spoke to Kropiwnicki and Palka [*Solidarność* leaders in Łódź], but the conversation was difficult and rather fruitless. We stayed at some parish, and in the middle of the night, the filmmaker Grzegorz Królikiewicz darted in, wanting to show us a film about how [Marek] Edelman was

¹⁶ Stefania Dzięcielska-Machnikowska and Grzegorz Matuszak, *Czternaście łódzkich miesięcy: studia socjologiczne sierpień 1980 - wrzesień 1981* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1984), 46.

¹⁷ Dzięcielska-Machnikowska and Matuszak, *Czternaście łódzkich miesięcy*, 11-16, 38, 40, 47.

manipulating the union. He exclaimed: ‘what are you looking for in here, you didn’t partake in the 1905 revolution!’ A very odd man. The priest threw him out at 2.30 am. I made off the next morning with a true sense of relief.¹⁸

The late Marek Edelman was the only surviving leader of the Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, and one of the few intellectuals who decided not to move to the rebuilt Warsaw, but actually to stay in Łódź. He was also a persistent target of anti-Semitic incidents.¹⁹ If Łódź remained in the avant-garde, then only as Poland’s “evil city:” plagued by crime, immorality, anti-Semitism and so forth. It had drifted away from both Warsaw and the rest of Poland as to become nearly a foreign country. The Film Studio Profil, that in the early 1970s was a hope for making non-Warsaw and non-Jagiellon film narratives, and that Królikiewicz (a master of “proletarian baroque”²⁰) was initially a member of, slipped into obscure national communism; its head, after 1981, became one of the key members of the Grunwald Patriotic Union, perhaps the most infamous Piast-based political movement, and today actually embraced neo-fascism that glorifies the 1968 purges. In the early 1990s, one of Łódź’s *Solidarność* activists coined a phrase that put Łódź’s position in a nutshell: “Łódź’s today is Poland’s tomorrow.” But this was hardly a sanguine dictum: rather, it held that Poland’s future calamities had their precedence in Łódź.²¹

Kaczyński spoke of Łódź as an outsider, and a person involved in “making history” (both national and global). From inside Łódź, *Solidarność* and the “history” made in Warsaw and Gdańsk, looked as massive disempowerment. When during the enormously contentious fourteen months following the Gdańsk agreement and halted by the introduction of the Martial Law on 13 December 1981, Łódź’s factories, like many others in Poland, went on strike to express their solidarity with the Gdańsk shipyard (*strajk solidarnościowy*), they did so because they feared that the benefits from the Gdańsk agreements might not be granted to others. *Kto staje, ten dostaje* – only those who strike, get something – was leitmotif of the strikes in Łódź. In 1971 Łódź’s workers fought a universal cause: the meat price hike affected the entire nation, and by bringing it down, Łódź textile workers helped everybody. Now, they first regretted that nobody bothered to visit Łódź, and second that decisions with nation-wide

¹⁸ Michał Karnowski, Piotr Zaremba, *O dwóch takich...*, 164.

¹⁹ Witold Kulesza, Leszek Olejnik, Symcha Keller, “Mur Głupoty” [A wall of stupidity] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (1 February 2000): 1.

²⁰ Roman Pawłowski, “Przypadek Królikiewicza” [The Królikiewicz case] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (17 May 2003).

²¹ The phrase goes: “Co dziś w Łodzi, jutro w Polsce,” Originally this was Stefan Niesiołowski’s upbeat commentary on the right-wing electoral victory in municipal elections in 1990 in Łódź, cf. Paweł Smoleński, “Łódzkie klocki” [The Łódź puzzle] *Gazeta Wyborcza* (1-2 February 1992): 12.

consequences were being made “over people’s heads.”²² The impressive number of 10 million *Solidarność* members had been usually interpreted as a proof of the massive empowerment, unprecedented before and after the “Polish miraculous year.” Yet, it could be a sign of precisely the opposite: of enormous disempowerment and disenfranchisement. People felt compelled to join in, because if they did not, then they would be left with nothing and outside the current of politics.

This perhaps explains why what Kapuściński described as “a new kind of morality” was also observed in the “spontaneous” strikes in Łódź. Just as during the 1971 strikes some workers drank vodka, built bonfires, invited people from the outside, in 1980 workers occupied their factories, and let nobody in. There was an astonishingly stringent striking discipline. Although the public transit was not running, two sociologists studying strikes noted no latecomers – something impossible to achieve during normal working days. Even those on sick leave made the effort and came to join the strike. A survey made amongst the striking workers revealed they felt compelled to strike: 82 percent of the interviewed female textile workers declared that they would join the strike even if they did not subscribe to the strikers’ postulates, because, as 50 percent of them declared “one needs to follow others”. 21 of the 82 percent would join the strike, but still try to explain to others their different standpoint. Only 17 percent would not join the strike, should they think it unreasonable. What is telling is that such attitudes were more profound in Marchlewski, that had long striking traditions than in the smaller Kunicki mill, where most women have never struck before. Nearly all women who had struck in 1971, declared they would join a strike in 1980 even if they personally disagreed with it. The most experienced workers, the sociologists concluded, “knew the ins and outs of the striking reality,” and hence they understood well that in order to remain in the political game, they simply have no choice, but ride on the striking wave.²³

Small is beautiful

Criticizing gigantomania

The struggle against *chamstwo* in 1980, as described by Kapuściński, was not a struggle against strangers being disrespectful in public space. Rather, it was a struggle against the state captured by *chamstwo* – and elites “removed” from the “common people” and their predicaments. Venality and corruption had devoured the state – and the post-feudal power relations were now reproduced at all institutional levels. *Chamstwo* now denoted arbitrary abuses of power and debasement of one’s inferiors. “The country manor,” wrote Miłosz about Gombrowicz’s theory of *chamstwo*, “reproduced at the

²² Dzięcielska-Machnikowska and Matuszak, *Czternaście łódzkich miesięcy*, 51, 56, 74.

²³ Dzięcielska-Machnikowska, and Matuszak, *Czternaście łódzkich miesięcy*, 91-2, 102.

lowest rung a formula pertaining at all the levels. The menial workforce not only had to work for their lords – but the subordination propelled them to cringe, grin and feign friendliness, and the girls had to chuckle when pinched by a flirting squire. A little higher a petty nobleman cringed and toadied larger land owners, and those in turn employed flattery to ingratiate a magnate. This formula seems indelible. It was passed onto state bureaucracy, which became obvious to anybody who wanted to get something done in a Polish office – both before and after the war. Wheedling to those on whom we depend, and absolute indifference to those who depend on us” was the modern bureaucratic *chamstwo* in nutshell.²⁴

Just as all the previous political crises in post-war Poland resulted in a change in guard within the Party, now an alternative elite outside of the Party was formed. To be sure, there was, alongside *Solidarność*, a bottom-up reformatory movement within the party (the so-called *poziomki*) as well. The formation of new non-communist elites was the novelty of the 1980-1981 events. Not surprisingly, the vertical polarization in Łódź did not allow for it to jump scales together with Gdańsk. *Solidarność* in Łódź was first formed at universities and the student strike in January and February 1981 was one of its most dramatic events. Just as the real difference in “material standing” between “advisers” from Warsaw and shipyard workers from Gdańsk was nearly negligible,²⁵ in Łódź it was still significant. In second largest of Łódź’s mills, for example, average salary of a worker constituted 53% of a wage of an engineer in 1970. Although by 1975 this rose to 65%, we still cannot speak, as in the Gdańsk-Warsaw case, of a converging lifestyle.²⁶ What allowed the Gdańsk (and Gdynia) workers to be even faster in “getting established materially” was also the access to a port and “sailors bootlegging” (*przemyt marynarski*), as well as a growing informal tourist economy – that all was an important (albeit difficult to establish in numbers) source of additional incomes that were, as I have stressed, the main means of upward social mobility.

Formation of a new elite was the consequence of what I dubbed in Chapter Eight “epistemic rescaling.” The Gdańsk workers’ struggle, Kapuściński argued, was also a “struggle for our language,” to purge it of foul meanings, and ultimately to “restore the right relationship between words and things.”²⁷ There was an elective affinity between Marxism becoming an empty signifier, and a crisis of the state. One of the main insights that led to *Solidarność* was the inability of the state to fulfill even the most basic of its tasks. The shortages of consumer goods (in the face of rising demand) was becoming

²⁴ Miłosz quoted in: Józef Matuszewski, *Cham* (Łódź: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1991), 188.

²⁵ Kurczewski, *The Resurrection of Rights in Poland*, 13.

²⁶ Wiesław Puś, *Dzieje Łódzkich Zakładów Przemysłu Bawełnianego Im. obrońców Pokoju "Uniontex" (d[awnych] Zjednoczonych Zakładów K. Scheiblera I L. Grohmana) W Latach 1827-1977 [History of Obrońców Pokoju Cotton Mill, 1827-1977]* (Warszawa: Państw. Wydaw. Naukowe, 1979), 435.

²⁷ Ryszard Kapuściński, “Notatki z wybrzeża.”

increasingly conspicuous after 1976. The attempt to raise meat prices in 1976 was met with fierce resistance, although the authorities explained that price fluctuation (*ruch cen*) was a “natural” and “inevitable” phenomenon, and that a flexible economic policy (*elastyczna polityka*) was necessary.²⁸ In 1979, an extraordinarily harsh winter came, and authorities were proved often helpless and unable to cope with it. It proved hopeless with securing its subject the most basic needs such as food and shelter. During the 1980-1981 crisis, when many enterprises (and especially coal mining sector that provided most of hard currency revenues) were striking, both the economy and administration practically ceased functioning.²⁹ The crisis of the state revealed the need for novel organizational forms, and for society’s spontaneous “self-organization.”³⁰

One of the key words during the 1980-1981 criticism was *gigantomania*. The argument was very much like Scott’s (see Chapter Eight): large scale institutions are unable to effectively cope with tasks confronting them. Not accidentally, Ernst Schumacher’s bestselling book *Small is Beautiful* was published in Polish in 1981. Its Polish-language pre-face read: “for our societies not to evolve into impermeable bureaucracies that can no longer be controlled by traditional means we need to develop new forms of social supervision.”³¹ Likewise, an engineer and a *Solidarność* leader in Łódź argued that “the drive to build giants is not the *signum temporis* of our century. For centuries humans had tried to build structures that seemed too large for our capabilities. We built the pyramids; we carved in rock a huge statue of the Buddha, we built a number of castles and churches and more recently the Eiffel Tower.” What linked all these gargantuan projects, he claimed, was that “they had nothing to do with economics. They were a whim of the rulers, result of cult, a symbol of the age or an auxiliary in conquest.” Nowadays, he argued, large-scale projects have become increasingly perilous: modern oil tankers allow for transporting large quantities of oil, but the economic disaster following leakages are of equally grand proportions. We cannot afford more *gigantomania*, for “the size of our planet remains constant. A flea should watch out and not to kill the cat she lives on.” Therefore, he postulated, we ought to reflect upon the issue of scale. “Six hundred cows crowded together will not produce as much milk as six hundred cows but each dwelling individually.” Some things cannot be solved only by exponential expansion and making everything bigger and bigger.³²

²⁸ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Krokodyla daj mi luby” [I want more and more] *Odgłosy* 23 (1976): 1, 3.

²⁹ Jolanta Wrońska, “Życie podwójne” [Double life] *Odgłosy* 31 (1981): 2, 3.

³⁰ See also: Gil Eyal, “Anti-Politics and the Spirit of Capitalism: Dissidents, Monetarists, and the Czech Transition to Capitalism,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (February 2000): 49-92.

³¹ Jan Strzelecki quoted in: Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, *Małe Jest Piękne: Spojrzenie Na Gospodarkę Świata Z Założeniem, Że Człowiek Coś Znaczy*, Biblioteka Myśli Współczesnej (Warszawa: Państw. Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981), 10.

³² Andrzej Wilczkowski, “Technika na miarę” [Technology at the human scale] *Odgłosy* 15 (1981): 5.

“Small is beautiful” became a common phrase in the 1980s – used for example to argue for “institutional diversity” soon before the “shock therapy” was set in motion.³³ Yet, the notion of *gigantomania* came up much earlier – after 1956 to criticize Stalinism.³⁴ The 1980-81 criticism aimed at delegitimizing not so much sizable investments, but power holders’ hubris and complacency. Colossal investments were particular darlings of the 1970s regime.³⁵ Aerial view was its most favorite perspective, and was typical footage in the “success propaganda.”³⁶ A scathing critique of *gigantomania* came already between 1971 and 1973, as I suggested in Chapter Eight.³⁷ It pertained not only to the industry, but also to cities. The drive to build high-rise was critiqued as contrary to common-sense and economic calculation, as well as not congruent with a vision of a city fit “for the human scale.”³⁸ Just as criticism withered away from the public sight between 1973 and 1979, the ascending economic problems spurred authorities to seek other economic solution went beyond the erstwhile penchant for institutional integration. A putting-out system was being organized to produce consumer goods on particular demand.³⁹ Success of the “small-scale” economic ventures propelled the 14th Party Plenum resolution on small enterprises from 1979. These, the authorities claimed, were marked by “their high flexibility (*elastyczność*) in production, which allows them to adjust fast to the changing market demand, whereas large-scale industry is susceptible only to those market stimuli (*sygnały rynkowe*) that spur mass production.”⁴⁰ Already in 1977 a new legislation on private lease of retail outlets (*ajencja*) was passed, and it opened the possibility for becoming “capitalist entrepreneurs” (or even “bloodsuckers,” as the media reported) that became increasingly widespread during the 1980s.⁴¹ Thus even without the *Solidarność* movement, the 1980s would have been quite probably a decade when “small was beautiful.”

³³ Witold Kasperkiewicz, “Szansa w różnorodności” [Diversity is our chance] *Odgłosy* 12 (1987): 3.

³⁴ Marian Piechal, “O gigantomanii faraonów egipskich” [On Egyptian monumentalism] *Odgłosy* 6 (1962): 7.

³⁵ Eugeniusz Iwanicki, “Wrózenie z fusów” [Wishful thinking] *Odgłosy* 30 (1981): 1, 4, 5.

³⁶ Jacek Indelak, “Na wielką skalę” [On the grand scale] *Odgłosy* 30 (1976): 1, 3, and for criticism of his own previous work see: Jacek Indelak, “W stronę ‘drugiej Polski’” [Towards the “second Poland”] *Odgłosy* 6 (1981) 1, 4, 5.

³⁷ See also: Marek Wawrzkiwicz, “Nieudane małżeństwo” [The failed marriage] *Odgłosy* 21 (1970): 3.

³⁸ Alina Poniatońska, “Wieżowce i moda” [High-rise and fashions] *Odgłosy* 42 (1971): 5, Konrad Frejdlich, “Prawo wielkiej liczby” [The law of great numbers] *Odgłosy* 51 (1976): 1, 10, Antoni Szram, “Między fabryką domów a Bachem” [The art and the industry of house-building] *Odgłosy* 42 (1975): 1, 5.

³⁹ Z.N., “Jak zrobić milion?” [How to make a million?] *Odgłosy* 41 (1978): 14.

⁴⁰ Stanisław Skowroński, “Szansa dla małych” [A chance for the small] *Odgłosy* 22 (1979) 4.

⁴¹ Bogda Madej, “Zanim przyjdzie ajent” [Before the leasers arrive] *Odgłosy* 52 (1977): 9, Bogda Madej, “Ajent narusza strukturę” [Leasees change the economy] *Odgłosy* 19 (1978): 6, see also: Eugeniusz Iwanicki, “Czy ajent musi kraść?” [Do leasers have to steal?] *Odgłosy* 39 (1979): 9, Andrzej Makowiecki, “Wytrzyj ręce w skraj ręcznika” [Wipe your hands] *Odgłosy* 31 (1981): 6, Roman Kubiak “Być pompierzem” [Selling petrol] *Odgłosy* 21 (1987): 6, Marek Błaszowski, “Nowość – plaża w ajencji” [Leasing a beach] *Odgłosy* 37 (1988): 5.

Economic rescaling

The protracted crisis of 1980-2003 was an offshoot of the rescaling of state, or, as I prefer to call it, rescaling of the economic center. This, again, can be understood only in the global context. According to Arrighi (who quoted Galbraith on that) transcendence of British-style capitalism unfolded in three phases. Free market could be replaced by “authoritative determination of prices and of the amounts bought and sold” either by being “controlled,” “suspended” or superseded.” Market is controlled when “the independence of action of those to whom the planning unit sells or from whom it buys is reduced or eliminated.” The market is suspended “when the planning unit enter into contracts specifying prices and amounts to be provided and bought *over long periods of time*.” Finally, the market can be superseded by vertical integration. These three methods “strengthen one another and providing the technostructures of modern corporations,”⁴² yet these are also stages in a temporal process. As we have seen in Chapter Four and Five, market did not disappear in the socialist Poland. What is more, it was buttressed by the wartime “excluded economy,” and a lot of efforts following 1945 went into controlling it. The process of urbanization-cum-professionalization was a step further, and it helped to suspend the market – as we saw in Chapters Seven and Eight. At the same time, “market” was not only an economic institution but also an alternative vehicle for social mobility, and hence suspending the market came together with redrawing of social boundaries and channels of class mobility.

The urban future in 1970s Łódź, or the “new age” as a pundit dubbed it, was a “non-market age.” Having spend three days at a large investment in suburban Łódź, Andrzej Makowiecki was coming back to the center, and walked pass a “noisy open air market amidst ugly tenements” – one of Łódź’s centers of the “excluded economy.” There, the journalist reported, “the furiously trading folks crowded. And I thought to myself – look at these houses and these people, possessed by dealings. Look, because soon this will be history. A new era has begun for Łódź.”⁴³ The very same author published in 1980 a reportage-epitaph for Łódź’s last bazaar.⁴⁴ Soon, he was proven wrong. Not only open air markets became the hallmark of 1980s and early 1990s, but the socialist attempts to “suspend,” let alone supersede, the market came to naught. Speculation (especially in meat but also of other food products) was back as a serious social problem because of the shortages.⁴⁵ In a way, struggles with the market returned to the point of departure.

⁴² emphasis added, Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 288-289.

⁴³ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Wiadukt – nowa era” [A viaduct for the new age] *Odgłosy* 40 (1967): 1, 4.

⁴⁴ Andrzej Makowiecki, “Grosz za dwieście” [A two hundreds’ worth penny] *Odgłosy* 32 (1980): 1, 8.

⁴⁵ Eugeniusz Iwanicki, “Komu opłaca się spekulować?” [Who are the speculators?] *Odgłosy* 31 (1981): 4, 5.

According to Arrighi, control over market was the “the specificity of British capitalism.” During the Great Depression, Germany and the United States underwent corporate reorganization. German corporate capitalism suspended the market: “horizontal integration of Germany’s national industries and the active intervention of the central government in support of the cohesion, modernization, and expansion of the resulting technostructure transformed Imperial Germany into the paradigm of centrally planned (“organized”) capitalism.”⁴⁶ The “single most important reason why British market capitalism was eventually superseded not by the German but by US variant of corporate capitalism” was the large US territory. The “US state enclosed an economic space that was not only much larger and more diversified, but also far more malleable than the space enclosed by Imperial Germany.”⁴⁷ Expansion of the US large agribusiness, “created the supply and demand conditions for the complementary formation of a larger and diversified national industrial apparatus.”⁴⁸ Because of its scale, integration of business activities by market mechanism was not efficient or even possible: “in some US industries success in superseding the market was a direct result of the difficulties in controlling or suspending competition.” As a result, “internalization within a single organizational domain of the sequential sub-processes of production that linked specific primary inputs to specific final outputs generated considerable ‘economies of speed,’ which in turn endowed the pioneering vertically integrated, multi-unit enterprise with abundant and steady cash flows.”⁴⁹ Emergence “of this kind of corporate structure in the United States ... became the effective foundation of a new stage of capitalism on a world scale.”⁵⁰

As I argued before, both the United States and the Soviet Union competed for the heritage of Imperial Germany, and fought precisely for the world supremacy in superseding the market and capitalism British-style. After the “Polish crisis” it became increasingly obvious that the Soviet Union lost that economic war, and the American-centered world economy was increasingly ran by multinational corporations. The upward rescaling of statehood, towards world regions, was a process that had been initiated already in the late 1940s. Except for the “Europeanization” of the Polish space (described in Chapter Seven), international co-operation between the socialist states became increasingly important. The Comecon was formed already in 1949, as an offspring of Stalin’s idea for a “socialist world market”⁵¹ forged by an “international Socialist division of labor.”⁵² Because of the insurgent Cold War, and the military

⁴⁶ Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 290.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 292-293.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁵¹ Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993*, 78, 82.

⁵² Jan Ptaszek, PRL-RWPG. Na drodze do integracji (Warszawa, KAW), 3-4.

conflict in Korea, the Soviet Union reverted around 1949 to a model of war economy, and in a military mobilization imposed that model onto its satellite states.⁵³ After 1956, however, the common Stalinist model of a militarized autarchic national economy was abandoned. This also included reverting to the international division of labor idea. During a Comecon meeting, held in Berlin in May 1956, the Stalinist model of crash industrialization was rejected, and the decision to build a commonly financed oil pipeline and joint electric network was taken. From the late 1950s, different countries were gradually being given monopolies over producing certain products.⁵⁴ In the course of the first three decades of the Comecon's existence, a vast number of supranational institutions, that enhanced collaboration between the various Socialist countries, were formed under its umbrella: commissions grouping various industries (steel and iron, mining, textiles, chemical industry), standardizing measures, technological norms, and transport tariffs on both land and water, integrating postal service and electronic communication, train timetables. There were also many common research institutes (in various branches of experimental and theoretical physics, space studies, ecology, but also in social theories), and especially in the 1970s a number of joined enterprises, such as the Cotton Spinning Mill opened by both Poland and the DDR in Zawiercie in 1972, and two banks, based in Moscow, that dealt with financial operations within the Comecon.⁵⁵

Already during the "March events" the internationalization and professionalization of capitalism became conspicuous. Most accounts of the West published during the 1970s were focused on the increased role of multinationals. They were described from the vantage point of a competitor: in the future, the world was going to be dominated by two hundred of multinationals, journalists warned, and they constituted a mafia-like corrupt structure spanning the entire globe.⁵⁶ It was in the 1970s when vertical integration of the economy reached its height – and led to the "epistemic rescaling" that in my view is largely to blame for the 1980 crisis. It was manifested in a downward rescaling of the state, and the emergence of a new economic center structured around institutions known as "industrial associations." These were the clusters of individual enterprises with a similar profile (there was, for example, Association of the Cotton Industry), administered mainly from Warsaw, that became increasingly powerful *vis-à-vis* locally-based factory directors and central planners – also as a result of their monopolization of contacts with foreign partners.⁵⁷ The most important high-rise in

⁵³ Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe*, 80.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁵⁵ For the full list of all the Comecon initiatives, see Zdzisław Bombera, *Międzynarodowa integracja gospodarcza krajów RWPG*, (Warszawa, Wydawnictwo MON, 1982): 226-238.

⁵⁶ Andrzej Blajer, "Pułkownik Behn rozpoczyna grę" [Colonel Behn starts the game] *Odgłosy* 22 (1974): 1, 4; on ITT Corporation Krzysztof Pogorzelec, "Macki olbrzymów" [Giants' tentacles] *Odgłosy* 12 (1976): 7; Krzysztof Pogorzelec, "Mafia" [The mafia] *Odgłosy* 13 (1976): 1, 3.

⁵⁷ Włodzimierz Brus, "1966 to 1975: normalization to conflict", 195

Łódź's new "business district" were precisely the headquarters of industrial associations as well as "central trading enterprises." *Próchnik* and *Wólczanka* were the leading enterprises precisely because they closely co-operated with associations. These mezzo-level institutions had informational advantage over the central planners and local managers, and they were to be the socialist equivalent of Western multinationals.

Socialist managerial revolution

The transition from controlling to superseding the market was by no means centrally planned – instead, much of the evolution of the socialist economy was made *ad hoc* and as a result of adjustment to emerging problems. Soon after the Battle Over Trade and nationalization of the industry, the market was no longer the main institution that lined various economic actors. As a result, what was often described as the central problem of the socialist economy – that of "horizontal co-ordination"⁵⁸ emerged. The "liquidation of the horizontal ties [between institutions] ensuing from the economic model adopted after 1949 created a system that theoretically ought not to function at all," argued Jadwiga Staniszkis. "This lack was, however, quickly compensated by the local Party cells adopting the role of horizontal co-coordinators."⁵⁹ Yet, as the 1956 unrest quickly proved, the Party rule was unsustainable. In fact, as an economic historian showed, Party rule was in perpetual "apathy," and boiled down to periodical bouts of controls and purges. Party apparatus was able to appoint and control apparatus at the province level, but this is how far their control reached.⁶⁰

The central planners could not run effectively the economy. Soon it became increasingly conspicuous that the problem of horizontal co-ordination could be solved by vertical integration, and empowerment of the mezzo-level institutions such as associations. Malfunctioning horizontal co-ordination was the central reason for problems for which the Socialist economies became notorious: constant stoppages, shortages of materials and lack of semi-finished products, and low quality production. Solution was found in engendering a "modern business enterprise." If one could not use the market mechanism for coercing the subcontractor to be one time (for example with printing labels for products), then it was much more reasonable to centralize the whole production under one umbrella organization – and in that case internalize the production of the required labels. As the scope and number of the administrative cadre grew, such expansion of institutions became more and more possible.

⁵⁸ Tymiński, *PZPR I Przedsiębiorstwo*, 96, 106.

⁵⁹ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, 74.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

Already in the late 1950s, a Polish economist came back from the United States with upbeat news:

the expanding large corporations (trusts, concerns) started exhibiting particular traits (salaried staff, size etc.) that pose a number of critical questions. Such problems are analogous to the ones we encounter in the Socialist economy. These are: the issue of shaping inter-human relations in such a way that they stimulate production, the problem of adequate managerial cadre, the scope of factory directors' power within the corporation, the relative advantages or centralization and decentralization of economic decision-making, pricing and sales policy under the conditions where prices do not have market parameters and so forth. Solutions to many of these problems have *direct practical consequences for us*.⁶¹

Both Socialist and Capitalist economies became dominated, Zieliński argued, by what Alfred Chandler dubbed later “a modern business enterprise.”⁶² Nineteenth century capitalism, with its small family privately-owned firms, regulated by the market mechanism, was over. Now small firms were all incorporated into one large organization. Short-term goals were replaced by long-term planning, and now economic decisions that from the perspective of nineteenth century capitalism seemed irrational such as long-term stability and growth, replaced former short-term maximization of profit. The notion of bankruptcy was obsolete. Owners were replaced by managers. Because most staff was now salaried employees, new forms of “motivation” had to be sought, and the “organizational man” with weak allegiances outside of the workplace was the model of the ideal employee. Republic Steel Corporation, American third largest company that Zieliński studied in his book, was wholly centralized: it internalized what used to be independent business units, and did not use market prices for its own internal calculations.⁶³

Such views, still in minority in the late 1950s, became the official dogma after the 1966 Party Plenum. Such “devolution of authority” from the central planners encompassed the entire Soviet bloc in fact.⁶⁴ Although, because of the institutional inertia, this reform

⁶¹ Janusz Zieliński, *Big business: z problematyki nowych technik zarządzania (szkice ekonomiczne)* [Big business: economic essays on new managerial techniques (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1962) 5, emphasis original.

⁶² Alfred Chandler, *The visible hand: the managerial revolution in American business* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

⁶³ Zieliński, *Big business*, 5-28, Chandler, *The visible hand*, 6-10.

⁶⁴ Brus, “1966 to 1975: normalization to conflict,” 161.

was not “was neither radical nor vigorously pursued; none the less it was never formally abandoned ... [and] in 1973 it was even reactivated, with industrial and production associations, rather than enterprises as the beneficiary.”⁶⁵ This is precisely when associations were turned into “units of a more economic character.” From 1966 associations were increasingly linked to the central plan not by direct orders (such as targets or constraints) but by economic instruments.⁶⁶ This was the beginning of the evolution to a parametric system.⁶⁷ Parameters became also used for remaking the nature of the relationship between associations and their subordinate enterprises. In other words, economic calculation, instead of ideological considerations, was becoming increasingly important.⁶⁸

In the 1970s management (*kierowanie, zarządzanie*) replaced supervision (*nadzór*) as the main mechanism of industrial governance. Before a Marxist economist declared in 1971 that management was the fourth “force of production” in the Socialist economy,⁶⁹ many ideas on how to improve the organization of the economy and industry were disseminated. For example Zieliński argued that just as Lenin decided to import Taylorism and Fordism (minus the class exploitation) to the Soviet Union, now it was time to try out American “incentive management” – a system that brings out employees’ “latent abilities” and hinge upon workers’ “desire to star,” and where managers are no longer supposed to be “bosses”, but turn into “leaders.” As a result, workers’ latent abilities are stimulated by turning them into a independent, self-governing agents.⁷⁰ Already from the late 1950s there was a number of similar voices: books and articles on new managerial techniques, industrial psychology, “human relations,” new techniques such as brain-storming sessions (*szturmowanie mózgów*) and alike.⁷¹

The much-criticized *gigantomania* of the 1970s economy was the product of vertical integration. The number of associations was reduced from 163 to 121, and many enterprises were merged: “such concentration was undertaken not only to promote economies of scale in production and increased capacity for research and development,

⁶⁵ Ibid. 139-140.

⁶⁶ By Resolution No. 383 of the Council of Ministers, of 7 December 1966.

⁶⁷ Krzysztof Pogorzałek, “Od nakazów do mierników” [From orders to parameters] *Odgłosy* 2 (1967): 1.

⁶⁸ Janusz G Zieliński, *Economic Reforms in Polish Industry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), chap. 4.

⁶⁹ Edward Lipiński, “Czwarta siła wytwórcza – zarządzanie” [Management: the fourth productive force] *Życie Literackie* (21 January 1971).

⁷⁰ Zieliński, *Big Business*, 47-48, 56.

⁷¹ Zieliński, *Big Business*, 40-48; “Human relations” had actually been discussed in a seminar in Gramsci’s institute in Italy, see Zieliński, *Big Business* 59-66. Haire Mason’s book *Psychology in Management* was translated and discussed; see Zbigniew Pietrański, *Psychologia sprawnego myślenia* [Psychology of efficient thinking] (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1959), “Szturmowanie mózgów” [Brain-storming] *Odgłosy* 27 (1961): 12, see James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Teoria organizacji* [Organizations] trans. Stanisław Łypacewicz (Warszawa: PWN, 1964).

but also to facilitate central control when greater reliance was being placed on indirect methods.”⁷² Associations were also regrouped, and now were commodity-oriented: the old division, based upon the raw resources used, was deemed obsolete. Since modern clothes were made of mixed yarn, the woolen and cotton industries were now under the aegis of one institution: the Association of the Apparel Industry.⁷³ It was also declared that the value of the product lies no longer in the quality of the raw material, but in the way it is made, promoting a more market-oriented valuation.⁷⁴ The various foreign trade corporations placed in Łódź were all merged into one.⁷⁵ Concentration was moved a step further in 1971, when a system of “large economic organizations.” (*wielka organizacja gospodarcza*, the WOG) was introduced.⁷⁶ Now the WOGs were supposed to be the equivalent of the Western multinational. In 1973, twenty seven WOGs were termed “pilot units” and given further privileges. By 1975 there were already 62 pilot units (covering 44.7% of total sales of industrial products and services, and 38.5% of all employment), and by 1976 this rose to 110 (67.7% of sales, 61.0 of employment).⁷⁷ A separate reform changed the way the performance of the “pilot units” was associated by profit and “value added,” providing “a link between performance and market conditions faced by enterprises.”⁷⁸

The Necrocity

The lost decade as opportunity

The 1970s “acceleration” was followed by the “stagnant” 1980s. Yet, just as with regard to the long 1960s, there was more continuity than rupture after the “Polish crisis” was handled. The Martial Law, as Poznański emphasized, except for the political goals of pacifying an alternative elite, was an economic necessity. Whoever was to run Poland after 1981, even if it were the *Solidarność*, would have had to face the dire economic crisis. The two phases of reform pursued after 1981 actually reinforced the leading role of the new economic mezzo-level institutions but even in a more informal way than before. Because of the necessity to pay back loans, the state put additional heed to the mining sector. Between 1978 and 1988 nearly 0.5 million people lost their

⁷² Brus, “1966 to 1975: normalization to conflict,” 195

⁷³ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Pogoń za czołówką” [Chasing the leaders] *Odgłosy* 3 (1971): 5.

⁷⁴ “Wystąpienie tow. Józefa Spychalskiego – I sekretarza KŁ PZPR, w dyskusji na XII Plenum” [The speech by First Secretary of Łódź’s Party Committee] *Odgłosy* 29 (1968): 2.

⁷⁵ Lucjusz Włodkowski, “Pogoń za czołówką.”

⁷⁶ Brus, “1966 to 1975: normalization to conflict,” 161.

⁷⁷ Brus, “1966 to 1975: normalization to conflict,” 198-199

⁷⁸ Brus, “1966 to 1975: normalization to conflict,” 200-204

jobs, and 138,000 of them were hired back in mining and energy sector.⁷⁹ Just as in the 1970s product quality was one of the elements rewarded by the state, now the state privileged only firms that would produce good that could be sold (no matter at what price) in exchange for hard currencies. The state virtually withdrew from the production of consumer goods, and those that were produced were of poor quality, leaving open space for the grassroots small-scale entrepreneurial, both legal and informal, activity. According to most accounts, the 1980s was the “golden age” of entrepreneurship in Poland. As in the case of furniture manufactures described by Michał Buchowski, “customers bought anything and waited months for the desired goods. They paid for products in advance, thus enabling investment... Profits often exceeded production costs several times,” and foreign competitors were warded off by state protectionism.⁸⁰ Small workshops (as well as sweatshops) sprung up in basements, attics, and garages. In many cases family turned back from a consumption to a production unit. Many previously “unproductive” family members such as children and the elderly, now gained “economic functions” – even if it was standing long hours in queues. The time that was reserved for “leisure” during the 1970s now was spent on economic activity mainly outside of the official state-ran economy.

State functions were becoming increasingly narrow, its institutions increasingly centralized, and its mode of operation increasingly informal. Because planning was no longer any good as an economic instrument (it was already softened during the 1970s), and it was in fact further decentralized in 1984, when local governments took over the control of nearly half of state-owned firms. The state took up fiscal policy as its main instrument of economic governance. It imposed first very highly progressive income taxes (reaching 90%) and from 1985 a high flat tax fixed at 65%, on both individuals and firms. The numerous (and often changing) tax weavers were used for shifting resources between different firms, and hence practically differentiating between the future ‘transition losers’ and winners. The successful and well-functioning firms were further consolidated into capital groups and informal clusters. Because of the avalanche of criticism, the institutions of former associations were disbanded in 1982, yet they lingered on informally, and their previous cadre occupied key positions in the economy (for example employed as advisors (*pomocnik*) at the branch ministries).⁸¹

⁷⁹ Dariusz Gala, *Reformy Gospodarcze W PRL (1982-1989): Próba Uratowania Socjalizmu* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2005), 73ff.

⁸⁰ Michał Buchowski, “Encountering Capitalism at a Grass-Root Level. A Case Study of Entrepreneurs in Western Poland,” in *Poland Beyond Communism: “transition” in Critical Perspective*, ed. Michał Buchowski, Edouard Conte, and Carole Nagengast, *Studia ethnographica Friburgensia* Bd. 25 (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 2001), 293.

⁸¹ Gala, *Reformy Gospodarcze W PRL*, 151.

Altogether, the first phase of economic reform (1981-1985) was based upon two seemingly contradictory tendencies: first, on the macroeconomic level, the state pulled the resources it could still retain together and forged a tightly administered centrally-commanded (yet not planned) economy, and second, on the micro level, there was an increasing autonomy of enterprises. Yet the increasing role of workers' councils and generally of the internal power struggle within individual firms became increasingly insignificant, as the real locus of control was somewhere else – at the mezzo level. Associations, now renamed *zrzeszenia* and the mezzo cadre, together with local state administration, reemerged as central actors of the economical life. A study from 1984 made by economists from the Łódź revealed that 70% of the studied firms received their materials and supplies via the association. Although in theory firm chief executives would be, after 1981, elected via an open competition, and would be accountable to the workforce, in reality their position was extremely weak, and they always had to seek assistance from the local or branch ministry administration.⁸² As a result, firm directors would leave it up to the association cadres to represent their firms with contacts with other partners, hoping that the association's bigger 'leverage' (*sila przebiecia*) would make them more successful.⁸³

The decentralization of the planning regime went hand in hand with centralization of the management of the state resources. Since material resources were in high demand, the state started functioning as a giant monopolist, who would not give away, but rather sell the material resources to the firms competing for it. The giant, informally-administered, firms started dominating the economy: as it was established in 1984, in 165 of 250 cases, large individual firms would dominate given markets.⁸⁴ Finally, just as in the 1970s individual firms were relatively autonomous in establishing contacts with foreign partners, the government centralized and monopolized foreign exchange and the created a central fund that would manage and distribute the hard currencies.⁸⁵ Already in 1983 nearly 60% of all foreign trade went through special Central Trading Companies (*centrala handlu zagranicznego*).⁸⁶ When the bill from 1982 changed the meaning of 'plan' that was no longer obligatory, but only would set targets and guidelines for development, individual firms became as autonomous as never, but with much less resources at hand than before.⁸⁷

At the same time a number of institutions resembling a liberal democracy were established in the 1980s. National Bank of Poland was founded in 1982 and this

⁸² Ibid., 231.

⁸³ Ibid., 196.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 216.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 134-5.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 190.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 159-160.

allowed state fiscalism to replace planning as the main instrument of economic governance. The Bank was directly managed by the cabinet, and it effectively served as the instrument for executive economic policy. It kept an interest rate at a level lower than the official inflation, which creates a situation where saving money was not profitable, but borrowing money from the central bank was.⁸⁸ This opened space for further strengthening of the economic centre, since the very cheap domestic capital and loans at very good rates could be administered and given out by fiat, only to those firms that the centre wanted to strengthen.⁸⁹ It seems that the previous strong position of firms such as Wólczanka and Próchnik in the associations they belonged to, gave them an important advantage *vis-à-vis* the other ones, and paved their way for becoming leaders in the post-socialist transition. The new fiscalism also reactivated the Revenue Office as an important institution, and likewise the Supreme Chamber of Control (NIK), an institution devised for auditing state institutions. The national parliament was given a new role, and likewise the institution of the Ombudsman was established. All this, together with a number of important bills that brought the Polish economy step by step closer to a capitalist model, and that the post-1989 “shock therapy” was based upon, clearly shows that the 1980s regime was somehow floating towards establishing a Franco-styled autocratic regime with a facade of a liberal democracy that would give it a semblance of legitimacy – something necessary both internally (for executing the changes), and externally, for being in a better negotiating position with Western banks and governments that Poland owed large sums to.

The cities, as a result, were abandoned and immersed in a crisis. Very little new investments were made, and if they were, then mainly these were housing projects built around the inner-city. Urban space, especially during the Martial Law, when curfew was in operation, was militarized, but for many it was a sign of weakness rather than strength. “When I woke up on the very first morning of the marital law,” one person recalled, “and I saw tanks passing by in front of my window, I thought, gosh, that’s war. But soon I realized it was the same tanks driving round and round, and I started laughing.”⁹⁰ The artist Józef Robakowski, who recorded on camera what occurred in front of his window from Łódź’s Manhattan, drew similar conclusions. The square what was in the very heart of what was supposed to be a business district remained abandoned, and was used for a number of auxiliary and mundane purposes, such as car parking or dog walking.⁹¹ The inner-cities, also of “historic” towns such as Krakow or

⁸⁸ Ibid., 179.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 237.

⁹⁰ Quoted in: Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz, *Pokolenie 89* [The 1989 generation] (Warsaw: Telewizja Polska, 2002).

⁹¹ Józef Robakowski, *Z mojego okna* [From my window] (Łódź, 2000).

Warsaw, were becoming increasingly depopulated and abandoned.⁹² Those who did not move out to apartment blocs were living in inner-city ghettos.⁹³ Although authorities have been promising to turn Kraków's historic inner-city into a "heaven for tourists," during both the 1970s and 1980s, it increasingly resembled "an abandoned desert." Because of crime many feared entering the inner-cities.⁹⁴ Łódź's Manhattan functioned as a gated condo: many of its inhabitants worked for the culture industry, and knew each other well. Distance between them and the "rest" of Łódź was growing, also as a result of the veritable tabloidization of the mass media. *Odgłosy*, a relatively high-brow magazine before 1981, was now printing interviews with new celebrities nearly on a weekly basis. There was a porter who did not let outsiders into Manhattan. A novel set in there makes that difference clear: inside the *Łódzki Manhattan* an inner-city boy who was accidentally let in meets people he could normally only see on television. They lived in upscale apartments fashionably furnished, equipped with hi-tech gimmicks, and other amenities; they had prestige Western consumer goods. The world outside is one of shortage, hopelessness, enduring crisis and malnourishment.⁹⁵

Throughout the 1980s, Polish cities have become "informalized": spontaneous peddling and even small open-air markets sprung up, old market squares were often used as *ad hoc* parking lots, and people even took over land and built illegal allotments.⁹⁶ Now the "excluded economy" was no longer outside of the mainstream society – not because it was superseded by urbanization and vertical integration, but because it was embraced by the population at large. Poles no longer traded in their own cities – but became Europe's most notorious peddlers (as well as guest workers). Yet, because no investments in the built environment were made, the increasing sense of stagnation was the hallmark of the quotidian experience of 1980s socialism. It was haunted by the 1970s unfinished investments. The World Bank report published in 1987 argued that if no new investments were to be started, it would still take 3 to 5 years to complete investments that were already pending.⁹⁷ Nearly half of all enterprises were burdened with 1970s debts, and this was serviced by their development budget, and hence arrested any new changes. The average investment cycle stretched: from 35 months in

⁹² Włodzimierz Kupisz, "Jaki tam pałac, zwyczajna willa" [It's no palace only an ordinary villa] *Odgłosy* 17 (1987): 6.

⁹³ "Czy nastąpi powrót do Śródmieścia" [Will the inner-city be populated again?] *Odgłosy* 31 (1988): 1, 5.

⁹⁴ Klich-Kluczevska, *Przez Dziurkę Od Klucza*, 171.

⁹⁵ Andrzej Makowiecki, *Król Manhattanu* (Łódź: KAW, 1989).

⁹⁶ Grzegorz Węclawowicz, *Geografia Społeczna Miast: Zróżnicowania Społeczno-Przestrzenne* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Naukowe PWN, 2003), 142-143. See also: Judit Bodnár, *Fin De Millénaire Budapest: Metamorphoses of Urban Life*, Globalization and community v. 8 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), chap. 5.

⁹⁷ Grała, *Reformy Gospodarcze W PRL*, 239.

1980 to 61 in 1986.⁹⁸ In this sense, Polish economy became ‘arrested’ in the 1970s both materially and technologically, and it was increasingly difficult to escape it.

1980s socialism was a standstill only in appearance. The rapid changes occurred in realms outside of the field of vision of the rank-and-file. The volatility of the “stagnant 1980s” *in the economic center* is truly astonishing. Only between 1982 and 1987, as it was calculated, the government passed 320 new bills as part of the economic reform, and 12 thousand other legal acts.⁹⁹ The law, taxes, conditions for credit and nearly all other forms of economic policy were constantly changing, and subject to arbitrary decision of the economic center. Firm executives were unable to make even short-term plans, since the taxing (and weaving) policies for the coming year were uncertain.¹⁰⁰ Between 1982 and 1988 the bill on state-owned enterprises was changed 7 times, about worker’s co-operatives was changed twice, on taxation – 8 times, and about the financial management of firms – 13 times. Many new laws were published already after they were supposed to be legally binding, or they were retroactive. A sample of hundred firm executives, surveyed in 1985, made it clear that this instability disempowered the firm management, and was the main reason for them to seek assistance with the state and local administration, and the association cadre.¹⁰¹ This is what made the young socialist managers fit for becoming the main profit makers of the post-1989 “shock therapy.” As the historian Maciej Tymiński argued, the rise of technocratism and the civil administration, that started already after 1956, as contrasted to the increasing “apathy” of the Party, found its finale in the 1989-1993 takeover of the state-owned property. Only that the new Capitalists, again with the “right attitude,” were not the technocrats of the 1960s, but their 20 or 30 years younger colleagues.¹⁰²

All this engendered perhaps unprecedented situation in world history, when very large groups of people *desired* capitalism – as a cathartic experience, a purifying shock (*ozdrowieńczy szok*),¹⁰³ that would generate new structures, as living socialism was increasingly becoming hazardous.¹⁰⁴ In June 1988 a truly tragic event occurred in Łódź, and it shook the entire city. One of balconies in Łódź’s inner-city’s tenement housing, on which an elderly lady and her grandson were standing, suddenly collapsed. The lady

⁹⁸ Ibid., 243.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 273.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 249.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 207.

¹⁰² Tymiński, *PZPR I Przedsiębiorstwo*, 226-227.

¹⁰³ Julian Bartosz, “Kiedy powstanie Czwarta Rzesza?” [When will the Fourth Reich be established?] *Odgłosy* 15 (1990): 3.

¹⁰⁴ Bogda Madej, “Czym grozi życie w Łodzi?” [The hazard of living in Łódź] *Odgłosy* 6 (1990): 5; see also: Caroline Humphrey, “Rethinking Infrastructure: Siberian Cities and the Great Freeze of January 2001,” in *Wounded Cities: Destruction and Reconstruction in a Globalized World*, ed. Jane Schneider and Ida Susser (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 91-110.

fell down, and died on the spot. The boy's clothing got entangled in the iron rods that had remained of the balcony, and was rescued. "Balconies, and not only balconies, and not only in the inner city, are in deplorable state," journalists lamented in a report on the city's condition. It was absolutely disheartening: Łódź, and its entire communal infrastructure: the roads, the housing roofs, the gas and water pipes, were all falling apart. There was a constant danger of gas explosions. Several safety inspectors advised some factories to be closed down, because they posed serious threat to the worker's health and life.¹⁰⁵ Just as in 1979, the "winter of the century" had paralyzed the country, and showed the people that the allegedly strong state cannot cope with natural calamities, now this very state, and its infrastructure, was becoming a threat in itself. It was increasingly obvious, that living Socialism was becoming hazardous, if not impossible. One could not feel safe even standing on one's own balcony. Although neo-liberalism is usually perceived as imposed from above, it seems that there was a widespread tacit agreement that the old system was simply unsustainable. Because the state let Poles become entrepreneurial during the 1980s, it was believed that they will be to capitalism like wish to water. Only that the capitalism they longed for was a system where "small was beautiful", and where a single person, or a family, or a small enterprise, could make quick and easy profits and "get established materially." Very quickly they were proven wrong – and a capitalist *gigantomania* loomed large, as we shall see presently.

Poland's ambulance murders

It was only in the 1990s when the curse cast in 1907 by the author of the *Evil City* pamphlet became reality: Łódź turned into a city where people were being murdered for money. Although this was a relatively well-spread local knowledge throughout the first post-1989 decade, only journalists' investigation revealed the Łódź "necrobusiness." In January 2002 *Gazeta Wyborcza* published an article titled "Skin Hunters." It revealed how paramedics in Łódź's ambulance service, in cahoots with private undertakers, found a way of culling more corpses, and hence making extra money. Everything started, journalists argued, in the early 1990s, when the free market for funeral services opened. When somebody dies at home, a doctor usually comes and writes a death certificate, but leaves the body that, by law, is required to be kept in a morgue and not at home. The body has to be transported to the morgue – but state institutions do not provide that service. The bereaved usually do not care who transports the body, as they mourn the deceased. Thus, paramedics started operating as agents of private funeral homes, and either suggested a certain company to the family, or simply called for one –

¹⁰⁵ Dariusz Dorożyński, Andrzej Gębarowski, Teresa Jerzykowska, "Łódź w reporterskim skrócie" [City life in short] *Odgłosy* 26 (1988): 1, 5, Bogumuł Makowski, "Piękne hasło i fatalna praktyka" [Nice slogans and the terrible reality] *Odgłosy* 10 (1989): 6.

and the bereaved typically thought these were still services offered by state health system. Only later they found out that they had been already serviced by a private funeral parlor and often they had signed documents (they thought these were part of the official procedure following a death) wherein they chose a specific funeral home to provide entire service to them. Undertakers pocketed the 1000 euro of state funeral subsidy and gave a part of that to those who solicited the family. This is how “skins” (information about the deceased) were being sold by paramedics.

But there were rumors, later confirmed in court, that skins were not only being “sold” but also “produced.” The system was initially created by three men: an undertaker, a former paramedic entering the funeral business, and an employee of a dissection room in one of Łódź’s hospitals. Competition on the funeral market grew really fast – also because, as in the days of the *Promised Land*, one needed no investments in order to start a business. “You don’t even need money,” said the undertaker. “You will get coffins on credit, you only need a handful of families to sign the papers, and you get their funeral subsidy. You need no capital to enter that market. Nurses, hospital administrative staff, or paramedics opened their funeral homes. This is a rogue market.”¹⁰⁶ Initially, those who had information about possible “skins” were paid in kind by undertakers – vodka and other gifts. Soon, however, money was being given in exchange for information. Because of raising competition, the value of a skin was on the rise. By the end of the 1990s, it rose to 500 euro (1800 złoty), more than a monthly salary of a paramedic. Soon ambulance dispatchers, who were the first to know about possible deaths in the city, and who could decide which ambulances to send, became key actors in the business. It turned out that particular ambulances (with the same crew) were being sent to most deceased. But it also turned out that in some critical cases, when somebody was in very urgent need and every minute was priceless, certain ambulances would travel around the city first and arrive to their destination only after the person had died. Saving lives was no longer profitable – skins could be “made” by tardiness or negligence.

Further, there were cases when patients who were physically healthy (but for example had a mental disease) suddenly died in ambulances. Police investigation revealed that some ambulance crews used disproportionately large quantities of a drug called pavulon. It is a muscle relaxant used only in surgery rooms – when a patient is to be connected to a respirator his or her normal breathing is halted by pavulon. Yet, ambulances that used pavulon had no respirators. They even did not use intubation tubes. After paramedics injected pavulon to patients, their breathing stopped within few minutes. Because pavulon paralyses all muscles, patients could not move, react, speak or even have a facial expression. But they retained full consciousness of what was going on – and died

¹⁰⁶ Tomasz Patora and Marcin Stelmasiak, “Łówcy skór” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (23 January 2002): 13.

of suffocation. After pavulon stops working, it decomposes very fast, and is virtually impossible to detect. The paramedic who was put on trial and sentenced to life imprisonment, confessed to have killed over thirty patients in this way. But because of the high records of the pavulon use, a number of victims was certainly much higher. One of the prosecutors claimed during the trial that up to 22,000 people could have been murdered either by deliberate negligence or by pavulon.

A number of state authorities were being formed about Łódź's necrobusiness over the 1990s, but none started an official investigation. Although only two paramedics have been pleaded guilty in an official trial, many more people seem to have been involved: ambulance dispatchers, emergency service staff, and doctors. The money paid to those who were actually selling the skins was actually distributed over the entire structure. They were organized in a trade union headed by a single man. In the early 1990s, he was in fact the head of a *Solidarność* cell in the Łódź emergency service. The bribes taken back then were actually recorded in an official trade union document, and so were the names in the redistributive pyramid. *Solidarność* leadership in Łódź was informed about the practice, and the man was sacked (he founded his own trade union later and continued). Yet, no charges were pressed against him. It seems that the necrobusiness was considered an inevitable element of the nascent market economy – and the market, as the dictum run, should not be interfered with. The issue sprung up in 2002 only because the three largest players in the system were no longer allies – one was eliminated from the business by the competitors, felt remorse and was ready to speak, and the other two were locked in mutual exchange of treats and charges. One of them actually hired a hitman for the other, was found guilty of commissioning a murder and put in jail. The internal quarrel within “the family” spurred the tip-off to the press and later on the investigation.

The original article, as well as a number of later investigations, revealed that necrobusiness was not restricted to Łódź but actually it was a country-wide phenomenon.¹⁰⁷ Further, all the three elements of that the system were in place well before 1989. First, in an article from 1958 that I found in *Odgłosy*, a manager of a municipal funeral home, certain Trzciniński, freshly back from an inspection, reported on the gray business zone that functioned between emergency service, paramedics, and private funeral homes. “Trzciniński,” *Odgłosy* reported, “talks with great details about illegal funerals (*lewy pogrzeb*). – Once I caught redhanded an ambulance driver. He drove all the way to Sieradz with a dead body. Discretely, privately, for 400 złoty. Another time I found a van from state owned diary carrying bodies – thanks God they did not place the deceased in between milk cans. Competitors [to the state-ran business] need to be eliminated (*konkurencję trzeba tepić*)” – Trzciniński concluded, but it seems it

¹⁰⁷ “Warszawscy ‘łowcy skór’ staną przed sądem” [Warsaw’s skin hunters on trial] *Dziennik* (22 February 2007).

was not.¹⁰⁸ Second, official drugs often made their way onto the black market. Paramedics were notorious for selling stolen drugs – such as yohimbine or even cocaine.¹⁰⁹ Finally, the idea that one can draw handsome profits from funeral subsidies had also been conceived long before.

In the late 1950s a certain lady named Wężykowa swindled state-own enterprises out of at least 125,000 złoty by pretending she was family of the deceased. Every company paid a certain sum of money to its employees if their family member died. Wężykowa read newspaper obituaries, found out where the deceased had lived, her husband working for administration produced fake certificates, and she went to the former employers of the deceased and asked for subsidies. Because such occurrences are usually unpleasant, administration at these firms never double-checked the information, expressed their condolences and paid. In order to avoid a situation when money is paid twice for one deceased (to her and to the real family), she started “murdering” (on paper) people who were still alive. First she “murdered” her own family, and then pensioners whom she knew used to be employed in given enterprises. As she grew increasingly confident, she started taking money for people who never worked in given enterprises – administration never double-checked. In order to avoid being seen too much, she invited another three people (who did not know of each other) into the business. All this continued for over three years, until a woman who worked for administration meet on the street somebody who had been “murdered” by Wężykowa, and informed authorities about that.¹¹⁰

What was the trigger for the ambulance murders? Why were these elements never put together before 1989 – an article from 1984 reported that transport of bodies was a serious problem in Łódź, and sometimes bodies stayed at home over the weekend, as adequate communal services started working only on Mondays. *Odgłosy* made a plea that a municipal funeral service should include the transport services.¹¹¹ A similar article from 1981 actually highlighted that the problem of unregulated funeral services (many different agencies, both public and private, were involved) has been noted from the 1950s but not solved. It claimed that the bereaved often had to pay bribes to have the funeral service done, but there were no accounts of people being murdered for money.¹¹² It seems that the double polarization that affected Łódź, its marginalization and exclusion, stimulated the rise of “grassroots” entrepreneurial activity that was

¹⁰⁸ Włodzimierz S. Marek, “Drewniana jesionka” [A wooden coat] *Odgłosy* 23 (1958): 5.

¹⁰⁹ Andrzej Mazur, “Owoce czasu swego” [The fruits of our time] *Odgłosy* 20 (1958): 1, 2, 3.

¹¹⁰ Andrzej Ostoja-Owsiński, “Fabrykantka umarłych” [Manufacturing the dead] *Odgłosy* 32 (1962): 8, Andrzej Ostoja-Owsiński, “Fabrykantka umarłych (II)” [Manufacturing the dead, Part II] *Odgłosy* 33 (1962): 4.

¹¹¹ J.K., “Sprawa ludzi żywych” [Living people’s affairs] *Odgłosy* 24 (1984): 5.

¹¹² Dariusz Słoma, “W tonacji czerni” [Of the black color] *Odgłosy* 46 (1980): 4, 5.

outside of the formal control and supervision. Łódź's necrobusinessmen were only a tip of an entrepreneurial iceberg – when the official garment and textile industry collapsed soon after 1989, as a result of “cathartic” restructuring, thousands of small-scale firms and sweatshops sprung up, and produced low-quality garment mainly for the post-Soviet markets.¹¹³ A nearby town of Tuszyn and Rzgów became Poland's largest open-air wholesale markets. Apart from that legal activity of many of Łódź inhabitants, many of the 1980s small entrepreneurs and criminals (especially those dealing illegally in hard currencies, or stolen automobiles) organized professional mafia-like structures in the 1990s – the so-called Łódź Octopus (*łódzka ośmiornica*).¹¹⁴

Financialization of human bodies, or actually lives, was possible only in forlorn cities – where urban space was not supervised, and where small-scale mafia-like structures could enjoy authority and could execute its business unchallenged. Not accidentally, the local mafia was referred in vernacular as “the city people” (*ludzie z miasta*) – they were, practically, running the town. Not incidentally too, the period between 1980 and 2003 were a period of intensified and organized football hooliganism – who also felt unchallenged in urban space, and were forced by the police, for example, to buy tickets for both games and public transport only from 1999.¹¹⁵ The period between 1980 and 2003 was that of fundamental fragmentation. No equivalents of Włada Bytomska or Łódzki Manhattan were erected. Even today, when asked, inhabitants of Łódź cannot point to a specific *place* where city's elites dwell. Because of Łódź's marginalization, and upward rescaling of the state, power was been fundamentally diluted and diffused. Financialized 1990s capitalism was one where profits were derived from devaluation and “melting-into-air” – such as selling of public (industrial) assets. It was also a period of rapid devaluation: one of Łódź's leading enterprises, Bistona, was sold in 1991 for 9% of its value – an equivalent of 12.5 detached houses, or 32 Mercedes automobiles, as it was calculated back then.¹¹⁶ “Skin hunting” was an integral part of that period.

FDI David Lynch style

The crisis that came after 1998 was in many ways far more important than that between 1989 and 1993. Not only the Russian markets, that the new sweatshops in Łódź were producing for, were hit. New tariffs preparing Poland for its EU accession made export much less profitable and significantly undercut the small-scale garment business in

¹¹³ see: Frances Pine, “From Production to Consumption in Post-Socialism?,” in *Poland Beyond Communism: “transition” in Critical Perspective*, ed. Michal Buchowski, (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 2001), 209-224.

¹¹⁴ Igor Miecik, “Ośmiornica czy krewetka” [An octopus or a shrimp?] *Polityka* 26 (2000): 1-10.

¹¹⁵ Jan Galernicki (pseudonim), *Nasza historia staje się legendą* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Giskard, 2006), 51.

¹¹⁶ Beata Kostrzevska, “Bistona tańsza od sklepu” [A factory cheaper than a retail store] *Odgłosy* 8 (1991): 5.

Łódź. Those who did manage to reinvent themselves after the 1989 debacle, found themselves now in dire straits. Those who were sacked after 1989, as Łódź sociologists reported, still retained hopes for the future. After more than five years of unemployment, they stopped seeking work. In the late 1990s, over fifty thousand people in Łódź lived in its “enclaves of poverty.”¹¹⁷ Just as 1989 was a crisis of change, the crisis between 1998 and 2003 was “the first crisis of capitalism itself rather than of the transition to capitalism.”¹¹⁸ In 2003 unemployment in Poland reached 20 per cent. It was during that crisis where the cornerstone of the capitalist *gigantomania* was prepared. Foreign direct investment, and the entrance of multinationals, started in Poland with elimination of small-scale retail, and the creation of “hypermarkets” – giant West European-owned multi-purpose stores, equivalents of US mini-malls. The two decades when “small was beautiful” were coming to an end. In 2000 leaders of Łódź’s Octopus were arrested and put under trial. The police started patrolling urban space in earnest, and new urban crime became one of most burning topics in public media. The “skin hunters” scandal, that broke out in 2002, was a sign that new times were coming.

The Kaczyński brothers, Poland’s “terrible twins,” rose to power precisely on the tide of discontent with urban crime – Lech Kaczyński, the uncompromising minister of justice, served as the Mayor of Warsaw between 2002 and 2005, and introduced Guiliani-style model of urban governance. The anti-liberal urban policy was actually pioneered by Łódź’s right-wing mayor, Jerzy Kropiwnicki, who outlawed a techno parade (that went on Piotrkowska during the 1990s) in 2002 on moral (and aesthetic) grounds. New construction legislation from 2003 opened way for real estate speculation, and private developers, that fundamentally reshaped Polish urban space only in five years following Poland’s accession to the EU. Many of Polish cities were reindustrialized. “White goods” manufacturing, that moved from North to South Europe in the 1960s, now travelled from West to East. Wrocław became Poland’s major new manufacturer.¹¹⁹ Polish cities were now competing for foreign direct investments – special economic zones were created, and urban space – especially the inner-cities – were now being invested into.¹²⁰ Gentrification, building high-rise (and intra-city competition for the highest building), as well as clearance of the vestiges of the landscape of petty capitalism took off in earnest.

¹¹⁷ Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyska, “The poor of large cities: Is an underclass forming?,” in *Poland Beyond Communism: “transition” in Critical Perspective*, ed. Michał Buchowski (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 2001), 225-238, see also: Kacper Pobłocki, “Mezczyzni z enklaw biedy: rekonstrukcja pełnionych ról społecznych (book review),” *East Central Europe* 36 (May 2009): 164-166.

¹¹⁸ David Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 166.

¹¹⁹ Kalb, “Conversations with a Polish populist.”

¹²⁰ Jan Drahekoupil, *Globalization and the State in Central and Eastern Europe: The Politics of Foreign Direct Investment*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008).

After two decades of crisis, the inner-city was gaining life again: “during the Martial Law the city was pitch-dark,” wrote Makowiecki, “and in the late 1990s Łódź was lit up again like a Christmas tree. Streets hitherto dead at night were back to life. Now they were pulsating with thousands of neon lights, clogged with thousands of small shops and pubs open all night long.”¹²¹ The new FDI-based investments, however, undercut that diversified landscape of private capitalism. Just as Piotrkowska was relatively prosperous during the 1990s, after 2003 it was being undercut by two large shopping malls opened at its two ends. Small stores were going bankrupt one after another, and when second-hand stores appeared on Piotrkowska in 2006, journalists started lamenting the fall of Łódź’s erstwhile pride. Now it was capitalist and no longer socialist *gigantomania* that was eliminating small players from the market. Squares and open air markets were one by one being sold to the new developers. Even the Bałuty Market – the most notorious hotbed of crime and illicit trading (often, as the rumors held, from theft) but during the 1990s one of the largest open air markets in Łódź with prices more accessible than in real stores, is now being rebuilt into a “real” market with a proper roof and stalls.¹²²

Wrocław was clearly a bellwether of the FDI-led urban restructuring, and Łódź was lagging behind. The “skin hunters” scandal was clearly Łódź’s nadir in public relations and marketing. Łódź remained a “evil spot” on Poland’s map. When Andrzej Wajda was receiving a honorary doctorate from the Łódź University, his speech did not even mention Łódź. All he spoke about was his childhood in the Vilnius region, his studies at the Kraków Fine Arts Academy, the Gdańsk shipyard, and the Polish romantic tradition. Although he spent a considerable part of his life in Łódź, he even did not mention Łódź, nor even his film *The Promised Land*, in his speech, let alone described Łódź’s contribution to the national culture.¹²³ The neo-jagiellonization of the Polish culture was completed after 1989 – the third book in Sienkiewicz’s *Trilogy*, as well as Wajda’s screen adaptation of a Romantic epic, *Pan Tadeusz*, were shot in 1999. The greatest moment of glory for the Polish neo-romantic and neo-jagiellon culture came a year later, when Wajda received a honorary Oscar for his contribution to world cinema. It was also, arguably, its nadir, as Wajda delivered his speech ... in Polish, arguing that “I am going to speak Polish because that’s the language I am thinking in,” continuing Poland’s quintessentially Jagiellon cultural isolation, its legacy of provincial imperialism and the inward-looking Polish cultural tradition (see Chapter Two).

¹²¹ Andrzej Makowiecki, *Ziemia Nawrócona*, (Łódź: Express Ilustrowany, 1997), 82.

¹²² See also: Aleksandra Hac, “Przestrzenna anarchia: Łódź oddaje place i ulice” *Gazeta Wyborcza* (1 November 2009), Szymon Marcinczak and Van der Velde Martin, “Drifting in a Global Space of Textile Flows: Apparel Bazaars in Poland’s Łódź Region,” *European Planning Studies* 16, no. 7 (2008): 911-923.

¹²³ Andrzej Wajda, “Malujcie tak, żeby Polska zmartwychwstała” [Make Poland resurrect through art] *Tygiel Kultury* 7-9 (2002).

No wonder, then, other filmmakers found it even harder to muster sympathy for Łódź the “evil city.” Marek Koterski published in a local magazine a Łódź-bashing piece that is worth quoting at length:

some years ago I completed the Film School with distinction, and for that feat I received an apartment [in the *Łódzki Manhattan*]. As a result, for 25 years now I’ve been stuck in Łódź – the only city in the world that I wholeheartedly hate. 25 years on exile in that dull, filthy town, with railways stations like shithouses in the middle of nowhere! The only city of that size with no river. The city where all cultural initiative dies out right at the very start. The only city where there were vacant places for world-rank performances, where performances were cancelled because of a lack of audience. But: full house at *A Flea in Her Ear!*¹²⁴ Fuck! I wasn’t supposed to write about that crap. I guess I’m the only person buying this magazine, so I can read myself. Those Łódź blockheads would read only something with a nude cunt on the front page. I experience the rare but fulfilling moment of revenge on that city, when I write about it this way. Once, when I was teaching at the Film School, I ordered students to come up with what to do with Łódź. ... One student suggested to spray it from helicopters with white paint, and turn it into a gulag for political prisoners. Another one suggested to line up all the bulldoggers in Chojny and order them to drive up to Bałuty. Well, there are no more political prisoners, and I do not know what happened to the bulldoggers idea either. But I know I will never again go for a walk on the Piotrkowska street, because every time I did so, I felt as if I was being punched into my face with my every step. That look! These people, as if all freshly recruited from a drunk tank! They walk as if they were attached to a hanger! Every meter of that street! Every passer-by! Every face (or rather: the Łódź muzzle)! Every house! All this humiliates and offends me. It reminds me straight away I’m a loser. The sheer fact that I’m living here proves that my life turned out to be a disaster. I’m ashamed of every single day I have spent here. When somebody tells me: “you’re from Łódź,” then I feel the urge to throw myself at him and punch him down.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ A musical, based upon Georges Feydeau’s play.

¹²⁵ Marek Koterski, *Nic śmiesznego* [No kidding], *BestSeller* 3 (1992): 31, see also: Wojciech Górecki, *Łódź przeszła katharsis* (Łódź: Fundacja Anima, 1998), 26-7.

Łódź's bad reputation was attractive to other filmmakers, however, as well as investors who could no longer find attractive terms in cities like Wrocław. David Lynch, who visited Łódź in 2000 for a film festival, "fell in love in Łódź because it was a city of fallen factories, as mysterious and beautiful as a woman" wrote a Polish art critic.¹²⁶ Lynch himself explained it thus to Polish journalists: "I love suburbs, factories, and so I love Łódź because of its unique ambience. Łódź had inspired me from the very start. This city is like a dream... I like the way Łódź looks during the day and in the night. Łódź made me start dreaming... The memory of my first stay in Łódź is deep inside me. The winter light, clouds, architecture and the people created an atmosphere that I fell in love with right away. And these old factories: extraordinary remnants of the industrial revolution. There are nearly no such places left in the world. Łódź has a soul. This is why I like it so much."¹²⁷

This stirred many hopes, as Lynch planned to build a film studio (mainly for post-production) in Łódź. His film *Inland Empire*, where Łódź stars as a forlorn, uncanny and cursed city that has a tragic impact on the life of Los Angeles celebrities, was supposed to be the beginning of the co-operation. This investment project, was supposed to revitalize the area around the Fabryczny train station – that as we remember from Chapter Eight was supposed to be the "second led" of the Łódzkie City already in the 1970s. Robert Krier, a famous Luxemburgian architect and designer, was commissioned to draft a revitalization plan, and the main building was designed by Frank Gehry. It was supposed to start in 2008, but it never did. The hopes it stirred, however, were highly reminiscent of the pre-1970 plans to build a "modern metropolis" – although because of the lacunae in the local collective memory – no references were made. But Łódź returned to its past in a number of other ways too. Although the authorities claimed that FDI-led reindustrialization was bringing jobs and prosperity, it had led to a number of new conflicts. In 2005, in the Łódź-based white goods manufacturer ran by the Italian Indesit, a twenty-one year old worker died. His head was smashed by a machine. In order to raise the pace of production, managers ordered to remove a number of safety measures. After the death was reported, a number of Italian managers were assaulted – and some had their faces cut with a razor blade. Now they drove to work with private bodyguards. The distance between the foreign managers and Polish unskilled workforce was highly reminiscent of the years of the *Promised Land*. The way class and nationality was congruent in the workplace turned Łódź into a dual city again.

¹²⁶ Agnieszka Zakrzewicz, "David Lynch - Łódź Oniryczna - kobiety i fabryki" [David Lynch and the dream-like Łódź: women and factories] *Racjonalista.pl* (14 October 2007).

¹²⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*,



Photograph Thirteen – Three layers of urban development in Łódź

AFTERWORD

“**T**he culture of the 19th century capital cities,” argued Richard Sennett, “set in motion a powerful weapon against change. When the mask became the face, when appearances became the indices of personality, self-distance was lost. What freedom have people when they are as they appear? How can they engage in those acts of self-criticism and change which depend on self-distance?”¹ Dialectics, or what Andy Merrifield dubbed “dialectical urbanism”, was exchanged for a sense of belonging.² That mechanism inhibiting positive change in cities has only become entrenched in the so-called post-industrial world. It is time to deal with that heritage. The terms “city” and “civility,” continued Sennett, “have a common root etymologically. Civility is treating others as though they were strangers and forging a social bond upon that social distance. The city is that human settlement in which strangers are most likely to meet ... I do not think that people now need await a massive transformation of social conditions or a magic return to the past in order to behave in a civilized way. ... The masks must be created by those who will wear them, through trial and error, through a desire to live with others rather than a compulsion to get close to them.”³ Finally, “the city ought to be the teacher of that action, the forum in which it becomes meaningful to join with other persons without the compulsion to know them as persons. I don’t think this is an idle dream; the city has served as a focus of active social life, for the conflict of play and interest, for the experience of human possibility, during

¹ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 255.

² Andy Merrifield, *Dialectical Urbanism: Social Struggles in the Capitalist City* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002).

³ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 264-5.

most of the history of civilized man. But just that civilized possibility is today dormant.”⁴

The right to the city, as David Harvey and many others have argued, is an universal cry. That universal demand can be voiced, however, only in local languages. The main purpose of this study was to show that the popular 1990s dictum “think globally and act locally” ought to be reversed. For the right to the city to become an effective political strategy that can democratize our political institutions and revive the “deadened” public space, it has to be tuned to stories as the one told in this study. Global action has to be complemented by local thinking because an important component of the global capitalist totality, class, is deeply anchored in vernacular structures – impossible to understand and comprehend from the global vantage point. And class, as Sennett, Merrifield, Tamás and many others have argued, is crucial for emancipatory politics in the current age. Thinking locally and acting globally should precisely be the answer to the cunning of class and the possible basis for building a global urban democracy.

Acting locally is acting in place. Emancipatory political movements have so far been too much focused on the politics of place and have paid too little heed to the politics of space. I showed in this study that the changing meaning of Łódź as a place was largely dependent on its “relative location” in the larger spaces and fields of power. I also showed that people have been deprived of their right to be city precisely through the politics of space. The Piast-Jagiellon choice is a very poor one, however; so far major resistance against the dominant, Jagiellon or neo-Jagiellon, forms of domination have been couched in a Piast or neo-Piast rhetoric. This has been increasingly the case in the most recent decades, as the global double polarization isolated places like Łódź even further, and pushed them into increasingly perverted discourses of resistance. The very existence of such voices points to the urgent need of political changes. After twenty years of liberal democracy in Poland it is becoming increasingly evident that the political structures inherited from the world of nineteenth century capitalism are insufficient for meeting the challenges of our age. Politically global but epistemologically local urban democracy in a place like Poland is possible only after the breaking away with *both* the Piast and Jagiellon heritages, and moving beyond the struggle between them.

After my lecture at the Museum of History of Łódź, in which I argued that Łódź is not an “evil city” and that its predicaments stem from its location in larger fields of power, a representative send out by the mayor for that occasion embarked on a nearly twenty minute long jeremiad about unruly youth and the juvenile hooligans who ruin the otherwise perfect city of Łódź. I was struck that the very same arguments as fifty years ago were still in wide use; blaming the victims is indeed still the order of the day and serves as the perfect excuse for the authorities to cover up their incompetence or

⁴ Ibid., 340.

indolence. Urban civility advocated for by Sennett differs radically from high-brow admonishments of *chamstwo* that the reader stumbled across many times in this study. We should strive for a world where there is no *chamstwo* – but not because it has been eliminated by evicting from the public sphere the people who allegedly display such behavior, but because there would be no such a role, or “mask,” to assume in public interactions. And the bogeyman of encroaching *chamstwo* could not serve as the perfect fig leaf for covering up the way people are being deprived of their right to the city. Only then can our political culture be fully democratic.

The vast temporal scope of this study was to illustrate the historical momentousness of post-war urbanization of Poland. The possibility of an urban democracy is indeed still dormant, but today this opportunity is far greater today than, say, a century ago, when the world of the *ancien régime* was holding sway in Poland. There is an increasingly universal agreement amongst Polish pundits, both on the right and on the left, as well as those who escape such distinctions, that liberal democracy is immersed in a deep crisis. The increasing withdrawal of many people from public life only attests to the fact that the forms of public interaction available today often represent a simulacrum rather than real instruments of empowerment and democratic participation. The sociologist Tomasz Zarycki recently suggested that reviving the tradition of early modern republicanism of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth could be a possible way of improving the ailing Polish democracy.⁵ It seems to be me like an interesting proposition. I would advocate harking back to fifteenth century republicanism on the condition it is quintessentially urban, as it initially was, before merchant feudalism got established. Such great leaps back and forth in history may surprise the reader – but struggling for the right to the city in a country with centuries-long tradition of anti-urbanism may actually require mobilizing a very ancient heritage.

Moreover, if the idea of “modernity” (coming from the Latin *modo*, meaning “just now”) contains the notion of a radical break with the past and immersion only in the present, then, to paraphrase Bruno Latour, we indeed have never been modern. Instead, we have been, in Bloch’s phrase, fundamentally nonsynchronous. As Sennett brilliantly argued and as I tried to show in this study, the world we are living in is largely heir to the *ancien régime* and its industrial aftermath; solutions to many of our most burning predicaments lay in understanding the obstacles placed in our past. They can be removed only after having been identified, however. Katherine Verdery concluded her classic study on post-socialism with a somehow counter-intuitive and only apparently strange proposition: that the transition from state socialism was not towards capitalism but towards feudalism. I hope that this study illuminated further that

⁵ Zarycki Tomasz, “Tradycje republikańskie I Rzeczypospolitej jako symboliczny kapitał nowoczesnej tożsamości narodowej Polaków” [Republican traditions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a symbolic capital of the modern Polish national identity] In: J. Szomburg (ed.) *Modernizacja Polski. Kody kulturowe i mity*. Gdańsk: Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, 2008, p. 59-66.

brilliant point: the social structures of the *ancien régime* are the basic scaffolding of the post-socialist society. For Verdery, the post-1989 neo-feudalism was marked by “parcellization of sovereignty” and “privatization of power.”⁶ As I hope it became evident to the reader, such are not only aspects of our most recent “feudal” contemporaneity. Rather, just as the mechanism of opportunity hoarding has been the central motor of class struggle throughout centuries, the fundamentally Jagiellon nature of Poland and its class relations show the extraordinary persistence of the old regime, or rather its fundamentally protean nature, and its extraordinary capability to reinvent itself in ever new circumstances.

The feudal metaphor for the “post-modern” times has been suggested long ago by Umberto Eco. Also Harold Perkin drew the parallel between the medieval fragmentation of ownership and what he dubbed “corporate neo-feudalism.”⁷ It may be argued that our long contemporaneity encompasses not so much the medieval period but the early modern one. Every new hegemony, argued Arrighi, is both a step forward and a step backward. The American century was, as he suggested, a creative return to the Dutch hegemony. There is more similarity, he argued, between the business worlds centered around the current multinational corporation and the Dutch chartered companies than between the twentieth and nineteenth century versions of capitalism. And in this sense the current world is indeed non-capitalist, in the way the external reality is incongruent with most of its common representations and the vernacular idea of what capitalism is about (free market and entrepreneurial spirit). But if we leave aside the narrow definition of capitalism, largely coined around the nineteenth century industrial version of it (where, among other things, “small was beautiful”), as Arrighi did and as I tried to do in this study, then there is no contradiction in maintaining that the current form of capitalism is fundamentally feudal.

In this way, the common 1990s idea that Łódź “returned” to its “glorious” capitalist past—the times of the *Promised Land*—is entirely erroneous. In fact all of the attempts to write a sequel to Reymont’s novel have failed – if inability to write a convincing narrative acclaimed by even a small audience can be taken as the measure of failure. In fact the most popular, and it seems to me also the most insightful, intellectual production that came out of Łódź since 1989 are the fantasy sagas written by Andrzej Sapkowski.⁸ They are, in my view, more *realistic* description of post-socialism than Reymont’s plot reenacted in a contemporary scenery. What I mean by realism is of course not a “truthful” description of the superficial externalities of the social world but

⁶ Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 208, 216.

⁷ Harold James Perkin, *The Third Revolution: Professional Elites in the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 42-43.

⁸ Sapkowski’s work has been translated into dozen languages, recently also into English, see: Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Last Wish* (New York: Orbit Books, 2008), Andrzej Sapkowski, *Blood of Elves* (New York: Orbit Books, 2009).

rather a form of representation that corresponds to the vernacular experience of reality. The immense popularity of Sapkowski's novels, in my view, derives precisely from the fact that the millions of Polish readers found the seemingly imaginary and unreal universe a convincing rendering of the very world they lived in. The saga's main protagonist is the Witcher – a male witch, a mutant with super-human skills (acquired through a process of mutation underwent in childhood) used for eliminating monsters. This is his “profession” – witchers travel around the world and get hired for monster-killing, and are distinguished by their (later to be disclosed as false) ability to constrain emotions. The world that the Witcher lives in is precisely that of neo-feudal capitalism – fragmented authority, with no clear “center,” and with various interest groups competing for power. The genre of fantasy, according to Sapkowski, is a continuation of *noir*.⁹ If *noir* was a quintessentially urban literary form, depicting the many aspects of the archetypical “evil city,” in a fundamentally fragmented urban world, in which power is not, as in the age of satanic mills, concentrated in one *place* but rather diffused, such neo-feudal aesthetic is paradoxically more realistic. *Noir*-like remakes of the *Promised Land* that have been written during the 1990s are simply unconvincing because Łódź is no longer a place where power is concentrated. Sapkowski's novels are more realistic because in his world space constitutes the fundamental locus of power – and the ability to command control over space (for example by fast movement or teleportation) is the key to success.

What Sapkowski also does, and this is why his work is important for my concerns, is to engage critically with the Jagiellon aesthetic. Sienkiewicz, next to Chandler and Hemingway, is his favorite author, and Sapkowski's use of the Polish language is largely heir to Sienkiewicz. This is even more evident in his “historical” trilogy, describing the Hussite Wars of the fifteenth century, and set in Silesia, Poland and Bohemia. The crucial difference between him and Sienkiewicz is that Sapkowski is not lost in “easy beauty.” Instead, as he himself stressed, his major aim is to show the “true,” i.e. personal, story behind legends. While Sienkiewicz wrote in order to “uplift the hearts” of the marginalized Polish gentry or its progeny, Sapkowski is more interested in showing the omitted and embarrassing details of sublime national mythologies.¹⁰ In other words, he achieved to overcome the Jagiellon hegemony without succumbing to the Piast agenda. And the fact that his feat found such a receptive mass audience is to my taste the proof for the urgent need to do with politics what Sapkowski achieved in the realm of literature.

The current conjuncture might turn out to be favorable for that. Because the protracted crisis of 1980-2003 was followed by a rapid phase of material expansions, sometimes industrial (as in Wrocław and to a lesser extend in Łódź) but mainly urban, the Polish

⁹ Andrzej Sapkowski, *Historia I Fantastyka* (Warszawa: SuperNOWA - Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza NOWA, 2005), 33-34.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

cities, after being in a state of lethargy for two decades, suddenly became interfered with. Although real estate prices were steadily on the rise throughout the 1990s, they skyrocketed after 2004. As a consequence, in many Polish cities grassroots civic initiatives mushroomed, and they became fully conspicuous in 2009. Their very emergence shows the crucial lacuna in the institutional gear of liberal democracy – namely, the fact that the right to the city is not recognized. Many of these organizations were formed because urban citizens were not being recognized as a party in administrative proceedings pertaining to their immediate surroundings. In other words, when for example a building permit about the area of somebody’s residence was being given, the dwellers were not even informed about the procedure, let alone asked about their consent or opinion. Yet, a non-governmental organization, unlike a private individual, can be recognized as a party in administrative proceedings (and hence be included in all the correspondence, be allowed to express opinion and even to stand out in court) – and the most influential of these organizations, such as the one in Poznań, function precisely as such institutional “mediums” that represents denizens’ interests in the many cases where their right to the city is being impinged upon.

To be sure, the massive commoditization of urban space that followed 2004 was experienced differently in various cities. In Poznań, for example, the struggle is mainly concentrated on defending green areas – because these virtually only public amenities and recreational spaces available free of charge are under attack by developers, who prefer to build new apartments in the place of parks (or “wild” verdure) because this lowers their costs and raises profits – they get a good location and all the necessary infrastructure is usually available there. In Gliwice, a town that is part of the Silesian agglomeration, on the other hand, the major line of struggle is public transport. Gliwice’s mayor decided to abolish the city’s tramway system and replaced it with buses. As a consequence, a grassroots committee collected nearly 20,000 signatures and organized a referendum about the removal of the mayor from office. Because of the insufficient turnout, that referendum was not binding. In the city of Częstochowa, however (both a key pilgrimage site and an industrial town), a similar referendum, organized mainly by small entrepreneurs who were dissatisfied with the way the city’s mayor made a number of concessions and investments that profited the Catholic Church, was successful.

Likewise, on the 17th of January 2010, the current mayor of Łódź will face possible impeachment. In Łódź the “trigger” for organizing a referendum was again different – mayor’s many foreign trips (more for holidays than for business, the argument went) as well as a small incident in which he disrespected an rank-and-file employee of the municipality made the worm turn in Łódź. Also, in Spring 2009 a grassroots coalition named *Respect for Łódź* (Szacunek dla Łodzi) was established, and it seeks to defend Łódź’s industrial and cultural heritage that has been entirely disregarded by Łódź’s post-1989 authorities. Very often even buildings that have been even listed as

monuments were demolished – often at night and in secret – so developers could get again a good location for their gated communities and the like. That eruption of grassroots activism is indeed unprecedented. What is more, these groups are post-political in the sense that defending right to the city brings together people who are normally slotted into conflicted political pigeonholes (the right, left) under the pressure of national-based symbolic politics. This brief comparison between Poznań, Częstochowa, Gliwice and Łódź, as well as I hope this entire study, shows that there is no single road to urban democracy. A true urban democracy can only be global. But such global democracy can be built only thanks to local insights.

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