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PAPERS ON SOME PROBLEMS OF THE HUNGARIAN VILLAGE

II.

Budapest
1967

RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

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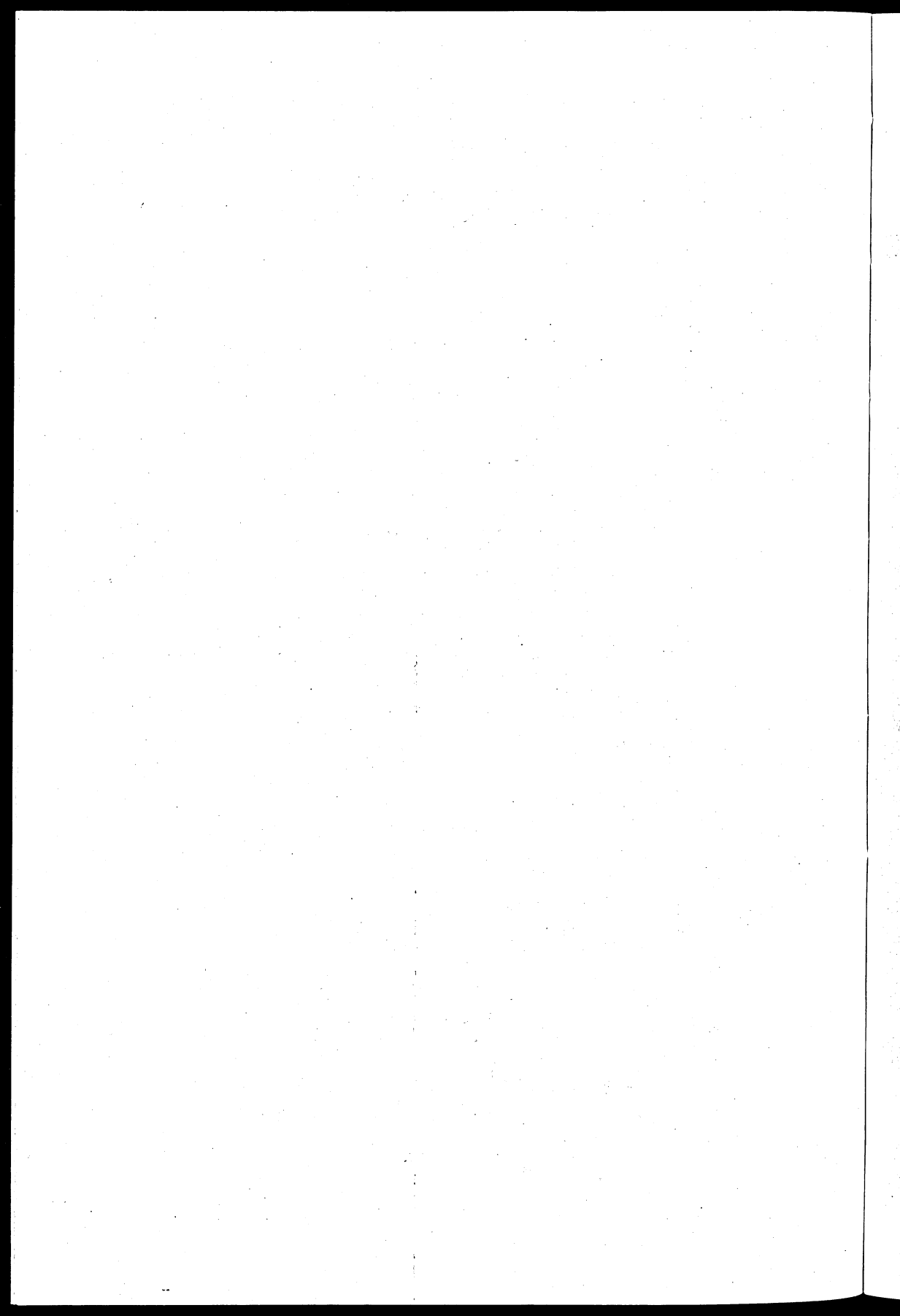
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✓ THE HUNGARIAN TANYA SYSTEM

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The Hungarian tanya¹ world represents a peculiar settlement and farming system in Europe. As for its aspect it hardly differs from the usual forms of scattered agricultural settlements. However, when considering its origin, economical importance as well as its role in the network of settlements its individual character becomes obvious.

Hungarian tanya system is a characteristic settlement form of the most significant region of the Hungarian agricultural production: the Great Plain. On the vast central plain /about 30.000 km²/ of the country "giant" villages, agrarian towns located wide apart and in the space between them a more or less dense tanya world, scattered, lonely tanyas compose the characteristic settlement pattern.

The tanya world of the Great Plain - as we now see it - developed during the 18. and 19. centuries but its historical preliminaries took shape under the Turkish occupation. During the 150 years of Turkish occupation settlement pattern of the Great Plain ruled by the Turks suffered a fundamental transformation owing to the requirements of defense and the changed farming conditions. As a result of the frequent combats and dragging away of population the relatively dense network of tiny villages became considerably loose. The settlements of the occupied regions became properties partly of Turkish aristocrats, partly of the Turkish treasury. Some of the settlements, e.g. the so called "khász" towns /properties of the

¹ isolated farmsteads

Turkish treasury/ possessed a relative freedom and legal independence and their inhabitants enjoyed a relative protection. As a result the population of near and far villages and destroyed settlements found security in these settlements. The barren country-side of the evacuated villages joined the outskirts of the settlements which accepted the flying inhabitants. It was at that time that giant villages located far from each other came into being in the Great Plain; later some of them developed into agrarian towns. Even these major agglomerations did not contain more than 5000-10000 inhabitants. However their outskirts extended to 100.000-150.000 ha owing to the incorporation of the destroyed villages. On this vast area farming and settling forms applied to the special historical conditions developed.

In the Great Plain drop farming fell into the background significantly; its area shrivelled up. On the vast puszta area extensive animal keeping took place with considerable cattle dealing. Cattle reared in the open air could be driven to far distances; it became the main source of income for the population of giant villages and country towns.

Cattle and horse raising wide spread in the Great Plain had a marked effect on the development of both the central and outlying areas of settlements. The centrum of the settlement consisted of the irregularly built dwelling houses of the inhabitants. There were only unfenced dwelling houses here without any farm buildings and farm yards. The farm buildings - stables, barns, granaries etc. - were situated outside the village in a zone of stable enclosure. In this so called "divided settlement pattern" everybody had two plots. On one of them, in the centrum of the settlement he had his dwelling house, on the other - in the zone of stable enclosure - his farm buildings, animals, fodder, granaries - i.e. his farm yard. The term "divided settlement pattern" originated from this separation of dwelling house and farm yard. The stable enclosures were encircled by

the inner pastures, those of milk cows and draught animals. At some of the places vineyards and kitchen-gardens were hammed in. Beyond all these plough lands were situated. The less important crop production took place mostly on primarily owned private estates, - less frequently in land communities. Often the acreage of plough lands was so small that it did not even form a complete circle. Thus the inner pastures were joined by the outer ones. On the vast uninhabited puszta nomadic stock raising took place. Animals together with their sheperds were in the open air all year round. In winter they withdrew to their winter quarters. These winter quarters established on common pastures - uncovered areas fenced for the animals with temporary huts beside them for the sheperds - were not constant structures. They were provisional buildings easily transportable by the sheperds from grazed pastures to new ones. The order of grazing was laid down by a council representing the community of the farmers; it had to be respected by the engaged sheperds. In the 17. century private pastures of considerable acreage occurred too; their number increased and at the end of the century exceeded that of the common pastures.

Thus, economy was based primarily on stock raising and animal dealing. Crop farming, viticulture and industry were of subordinate, supplementary character. Majority of the settlements had to depend on grain import, on the other hand their cattle export was enormous.

The order of possession did not follow the manorial system. It was essentially a free, civil land system restricted and arranged however by the town council /communitas/ with the rights of land owners. On these economic bases a peculiar social structure developed. It was not a society of serf village but was similar to the manufacturing-trading communities - based here however on animal keeping and dealing. It was the so called "civis society" The well-to-do farmers and the smaller ones who were practically free citizens were

permitted to move and inherit freely. They employed a great number of sheperds and field workers. Farming was linked with the institution of the extended family too. Married sons did not leave the family but ran the undivided lands collectively.

In the 18. century after liberating from the Turkish occupation population of the Great Plain came to a more peaceful era. The number of population increased rapidly. New villages of colonists came into being. They were villages of Hungarians moving in from other parts of the country and of serfs settled in from German and Slavic regions of the Monarchy, and were under the authority of landowners. On the other hand, majority of the old settlements of the Great Plain having gone through the hardships of the Turkish regime kept their legal independence; their inhabitants were free holders; free from any feudal restrictions. Their population grew rapidly, as their legal advantages and privileges attracted the immigrants.

During the 18. century the extensive stock raising on the puszta fell gradually into the background, the pastures were transformed to plough lands. Agriculture expanded at a high rate; between 1720 and 1780 the acreage of plough lands increased fivefold. On the plough lands mostly grain production took place. Transformation was greatly hastened by the prosperity in corn increasing both at home and abroad. By the end of the century majority of the pastures was transformed into plough lands.

The significant transformation of the structure of farming had an effect on the settlement pattern too. The inner part /stable enclosures + dwelling house zone/ of the settlements was gradually transformed. The old form of the stable enclosures became unnecessary owing to the decreasing animal keeping. Since population increased markedly, the old dwelling zone proved to be small. Thus dwelling houses were built in the stable enclosures too; on the other hand, in the centrum of the settlements where previously only dwelling houses could be found court-yards connected with agriculture developed gradually. All these took place slowly and gradually, not by an expert guidance.

Owing to the expansion of plough lands more distant parts of the outskirts of villages got under cultivation. However, the furthest lands - at a distance of 25-30 km - could not be cultivated by daily communication. According to the new method of production the court-yards in the centrum of the village were not sufficiently spacious and easy to reach either. Therefore during the main season the farmers moved out temporarily to their private lands. They took the draught animals there, made constant buildings for them and for the fodder and products. At the same time these buildings served as provisional living quarters too.

Thus, on the plough lands farm-yards developed which - out of necessity - became provisional homes too. This formation is the tanya. Thus, in this first phase of its development the former stable enclosures took over the role of the farm-yard adjusted to the requirements of agriculture. In this phase of development the tanya was not independent settlement; it was only belonging, accessory to the central area. The owners did not depart from the village as their constant dwelling places were their houses on their plot in the village.

Tanya was permitted to be built however only by those possessing plots with houses on them in the villages and plough lands on the confines. No one was permitted to move out permanently from the village to the lands at that time.

During the 19. century monumental operations were carried out in connection with river control, protection against flood and drainage. By controlling the Tisza and the rivers of Körös nearly 2,5 million ha was protected against flood. The former living-space of fishermen and "pákász"³ men shrivelled up and these fecund lands became plough lands too. The areas protected against flood in the Great Plain increased, partly the area of the villages of settled serfs where at that time formation of

³ primitive predatory man living in the marshes on hunting and fishing.

tanya on distant new plough lands also began. At the beginning they were established in field communities of serfs - though restrictedly; later from the middle of the century - liberated from the authority of feudal landowners - on private lands. In the second phase of tanya development, in the first half of the 19. century the system of farming and settling on tanya became general in the Great Plain.

As agriculture became more and more intensive the amount of field work increased, nomadic stock raising was replaced gradually by stabling, it became more and more imperative to have somebody staying permanently on the tanya. Thus with the increase of its economical importance being the functional centre of the estate the tanya became a permanent dwelling place. From the second half of the 19. century on - i.e. the third phase of the tanya development - the tanya became permanently inhabited. This process was practically connected with the disintegration of the great families. According to the new order of inheritance estates were distributed among the owner's children who established new tanyas on their separate lands and moved permanently there. They had no longer houses in the village. This permanently inhabited tanya which was established mostly on small estates had hardly any connection with the villages on the outskirts of which it was situated lonely, at a distance of 1-3 km from the neighbouring tanya. They really became scattered settlements.

In the 20. century considerable proportion of the population of the Great Plain - nearly 1 million persons - lived on tanya. In regions previously uninhabited or sparsely populated all utilizable lands became exploitable by tanya-farming. Moreover, the highly labour intensive vine-, fruit-, vegetable- and tobacco growing established on vast areas were closely attached to the system of tanya-farming and settling on small estates; they could not even come into being without it. Thus the tanya-system added considerably to the progress of the Hungarian agricultural production and to the increase

of intensity. It offered a living to thousands of small and dwarf holder peasant families. While their life conditions were very poor on the tanyas far - sometimes at a distance of 20-25 km - from the next town or any closed settlement, their lives were less hard than those of the landless agricultural proletarians, inhabitants of the tanyas of farm servants on the large estates, who had to accept tanya-life for a very low payment owing to the great excess of agrarian population in Hungary. But the life of several thousand season workers or unemployed agricultural proletarians was even worse than that.

Public opinion in Hungary was concerned with the question of tanya from the early forties on. However the problem could not be solved under the social-economical conditions at that time and was left to the socialist Hungary as a serious inheritance.

In 1945 the land reform gave land to the majority of the agricultural proletarians. Most of the new small holders built tanyas on their lands. Round 75.000 new tanyas were built in the course of this process. Tanya of farm servants ceased to exist; population of the tanya became a uniform social stratum of small peasants. However, the new tanya peasants possessing no sufficient farm equipment were able only to a limited production of commodity besides self supporting. To supply the population of the significantly industrializing Hungary with food, to increase the agricultural production and make it more intensive by new investments were problems that were day by day less soluble by the small peasants' farms. Progress was to be enhanced by the socialist large scale farms.

However, possibilities and preconditions of developing the socialist large scale farms were not identical in every region of the country. When considering the developmental stage of regions there was a significant difference between Transdanubia and the Great Plain. In spite of the fact that after the Turkish regime, from the 18. century on the Great Plain was significantly developing it could not catch up with the time. In this backwardness the natural conditions - the capricious and extreme climate of the Great Plain, the extensive

sandy and sodic areas, the scarcity of surface waters - played a big role; their bad effect on production could be overcome only by considerable investments. Historical preliminaries of the large scale production - in the form of capitalist large estates - were not so well established in the Great Plain as in Transdanubia. Instead of them small holders' farms lacking in capital were dominant even before the land reform. However, the rigid, extremely centralized, bureaucratic policy of the fifties did not take into consideration the regional differentiation, the various local conditions of the country. Thus the peasant policy of the fifties could not coordinate the individual interests of the peasants with the social interests of the whole country. Serious difficulties rose especially in areas of tanya settlements owing to the bureaucratic organizational methods.

In further developing agriculture on large scale farm basis one of the areas giving the most problems is the sandy district of Danube-Tisza Mid-Region with its highly dense network of tanyas. In this region tanya-system developed to the highest extent; more than two-third of the population live on tanyas. We shall take this area to illustrate the present problems of the tanya system.

The area of about 3.500 km² studied by us includes a large part of the undulating quicksand area of the sandy district of Danube-Tisza Mid-Region. It is an area of bad drainage, dotted with sodic lakes.

It is hardly more than half a century now since the agrarian population swarming out from towns of extended confines - Kecskemét, Kiskunhalas, Szeged - bound the quicksand by rising vineyards and orchards with hard work. On former quicksands extended horticulture was established. The highly labour intensive production was in close connection with the farming-settling system of tanya peasants. Previously thinly inhabited sandy puszta became populated owing to the dense network of tanya rising on them. At present density of population is 75-100 persons per km². It is in this region that the proportion of those employed in agriculture is the highest.

Table grapes and fruits - mostly the famous apricot of Kecskemét - grown in the area of an average of 3-5 ha round the tanya were marketed in the town mostly for export. The tanya of this newly populated region was more closely attached to the town from where the majority of their inhabitants had come than those established earlier in other regions of the Great Plain. Initials of closed settlements began to develop only at such a distance from the town where it was impossible to go to and return from within a day. These tiny villages - the developing centres of the village network - are encircled also by a dense tanya-network. Majority of them became administratively independent already in the thirties. However, in the greatest part of the under investigation - which belonged to the three above mentioned towns up to 1950 even administratively - development of closed village centres has not begun.

In 1948 the confines of these country towns where the tanya-region were situated were separated administratively from the towns and became independent "tanya-villages". The aim was to hasten and help the elimination of the tanya world and the development of the network of closed villages on the outlying tanya areas of the towns. In the studied area a great number of new villages arose in this way with artificially drawn boundary lines.

The Tanya Council was established for the purpose of starting and supporting the process of moving the tanya population to the closed settlements that were to be built in designed centres of the "tanya-villages". The Council endeavoured to develop the network of villages by elaborating the necessary settlement plans, by giving house plots in the tanya centres and by supporting house building. The most important local public institutions - school, doctors' consulting rooms, council house - were built at places designed for the tanya centres. Building of new dwelling houses was permitted too only at places designed for the initials of villages. Building of new tanya houses at places other than the designed ones has been forbidden up to the present days.

Settlement in these places however has not made any progress. On the area of the "tanya-villages" viable, village-like, closed settlements have not developed until now. Even to-day 36 out of 48 villages of the studied area are without any centres, they consist purely of scattered settlements; the other 12 villages situated at a distance of 20-30 km from the town began to develop already before 1930. In our region the average area of the "tanya-villages" is 4000-6000 ha, the number of their inhabitants ranges from 3000 to 6000. In most villages the proportion of vineyards and orchards is above 25-30 percent of the cultivated area. The highly labour intensive branches of production are in close connection with the high density of population of the area. Small scale vine and fruit-growing requires a constant care and cannot exist without a close spatial connection between working and dwelling place. Thus the farmer cannot live far from his land. The tanya offers therefore the most economical and practical solution: close vicinity of working - and dwelling place. Thus, small scale horticulture and the system of farming and settling on tanya are conditional upon and inseparable from one another. - This means that in this region the tanya-system will have its economic preconditions until small scale horticulture is not pushed into the background by the more competitive large scale production.

What are the factors that have their effects on developing large scale production as soon as possible and what are the forms of farm units we are seeking for as solutions?

The two main types of our present large scale farms are: 1. the state farms, 2. the co-operative farms. Both in the whole country and in the studied area co-operative farms are prevailing significantly.

In the area under investigation there is only one important state farm: the State Farm of Helvécia. The greatest part of its area is situated south from Kecskemét at a distance of 10-15 km, covering the area of several adjacent tanya-villages. Its precursor was a vine growing and processing large

scale farm established with Swiss capital in the thirties. . . After nationalization its acreage increased markedly. By considerable investments carried out with subsidization it progressed at a high rate. Extended new orchards have been established and simultaneously irrigation works to moderate the dependance on the extremities of the continental climate and to ensure a standard quality and quantity of yield. On the consolidated land of the farm blockfield system prevails. In the area of the farm at the site designed for tanya centre an agricultural settlement was built by subsidization to ensure the permanent labour force. Majority of the tanya population living round it works in the farm. Their moving into the centre and elimination of their tanya-households is promoted by granting various favours. During the last years the state farm provided its labourers with a relatively high, constant, regular income approaching to that of industrial workers; their voluntary moving from the tanyas into the settlement - the closed centre - can be considered as a slow but progressive process. The question of that tanya whose inhabitants are not labourers of the state farm but members of some co-operative in the neighbourhood or private farmers is an unsolved problem. For economical reasons they do not want to leave their tanyas that were established in their vineyards or orchards and are at the same time their working places too.

Two-third of the studied area belongs to the other type of the socialist large scale farms: the agricultural co-operatives. After the establishing of co-operatives between 1959 and 1962 the proportion of private farmers became unimportant.

The tanya areas of the co-operative members - the dwelling place and an area of an average of 1000 square fathom are private properties. In these areas as well as in the adjacent areas of about 1000-1600 square fathom - on the so called "household plots" given from common property as beneficial lands - individual cultivation takes place for self-supporting

the co-operative members and their family. The rest of the cropland area is under common cultivation. Proprietary right of this area belong to the members, possessory right belongs to the collectivity of the co-operative. In tanya regions regrouping of the common lands of the co-operative into large coherent blockfields is difficult since they are dotted with thousands private "tanya lands".

In the sandy district of the Danube-Tisza Mid-Region the co-operatives are mostly new farms of about 5-7 years old. In most cases only the framework of the large scale agricultural production has been organized by them. Following this important step our task both in the present and in the future is to fill this frame in every respect with the real meaning of large scale farming. A versatile state support - long term state credits, a direct financial assistance in the form of new machines and equipment, etc. - helps the development of the co-operatives.

What is the role of the tanya in production within the scope of the co-operatives? In this respect we have to separate the co-operatives of vine- and fruit growing areas from those of cropland areas with animal husbandry connected with them. In co-operatives of cropland areas importance of the tanya as a working place is gradually decreasing. Such co-operatives are at the east and west ends of our studied area on loess and alluvial soils of good quality. Here the well equipped manors developing gradually as important units of the large scale farm are able to perform the duties scattered earlier in small scale tanya-farms - /stables, granaries, barns, processing units, etc./ - the level appropriate to the large scale farms. Developing of these manors is going on at present at a high rate. Co-operatives raised to different stages of development in the various regions and farms. In co-operatives where essential establishments of a large scale farming - e.g. stables, barns - are lacking the farmyards of tanya still plays an important role in offering place for animals and crops. This role is however temporary and will

cease when the large scale farm is built. Disintegration of the tanya-system has here begun and is progressing rapidly.

The case is quite different in the vine- and fruit growing co-operatives where the developing of large scale production is a complex and long term task. Gradual development of large scale production must take place simultaneously with the undisturbed producing of the existing small scale farms; namely, latters ensure a significant export. To solve this problem developing of vine- and fruit growing large scale farms takes place in co-operatives somewhat different in structure from those of cropland areas. Majority of the members are dwarf holders of 3-6 cadastral yoke. As members of the co-operative they continue to cultivate their garden and market their crops individually. But from their income they pay a sum - usually according to the size of land - into a common fund which serves to bring about gradually new vine- and fruit growing large scale farms. The part owners of these future large scale farms are to-day the members of the vine- and fruit growing co-operatives.

The privately cultivated bearing small gardens - under careful cultivation - ensure the living of a family of 5 for a whole year, but also take the working time of the family. This highly labour intensive small scale horticulture offers a good living and being closely attached to the tanya system stabilizes the dense tanya network even to-day. Therefore, survival of the tanya system can be expected for a long time in this vine- and fruit growing sandy area.

The tanya as a dwelling place and the way of life attached to the lonely tanya became obsolete and is able to progress only at a very low degree. They are supplied with public utilities a low level because it cannot be carried out economically. Only about 30 percent of them are supplied with electricity and those only since 1945. They get their water supply from wells. The network of their primary public institutions made a marked progress since the formation of tanya-

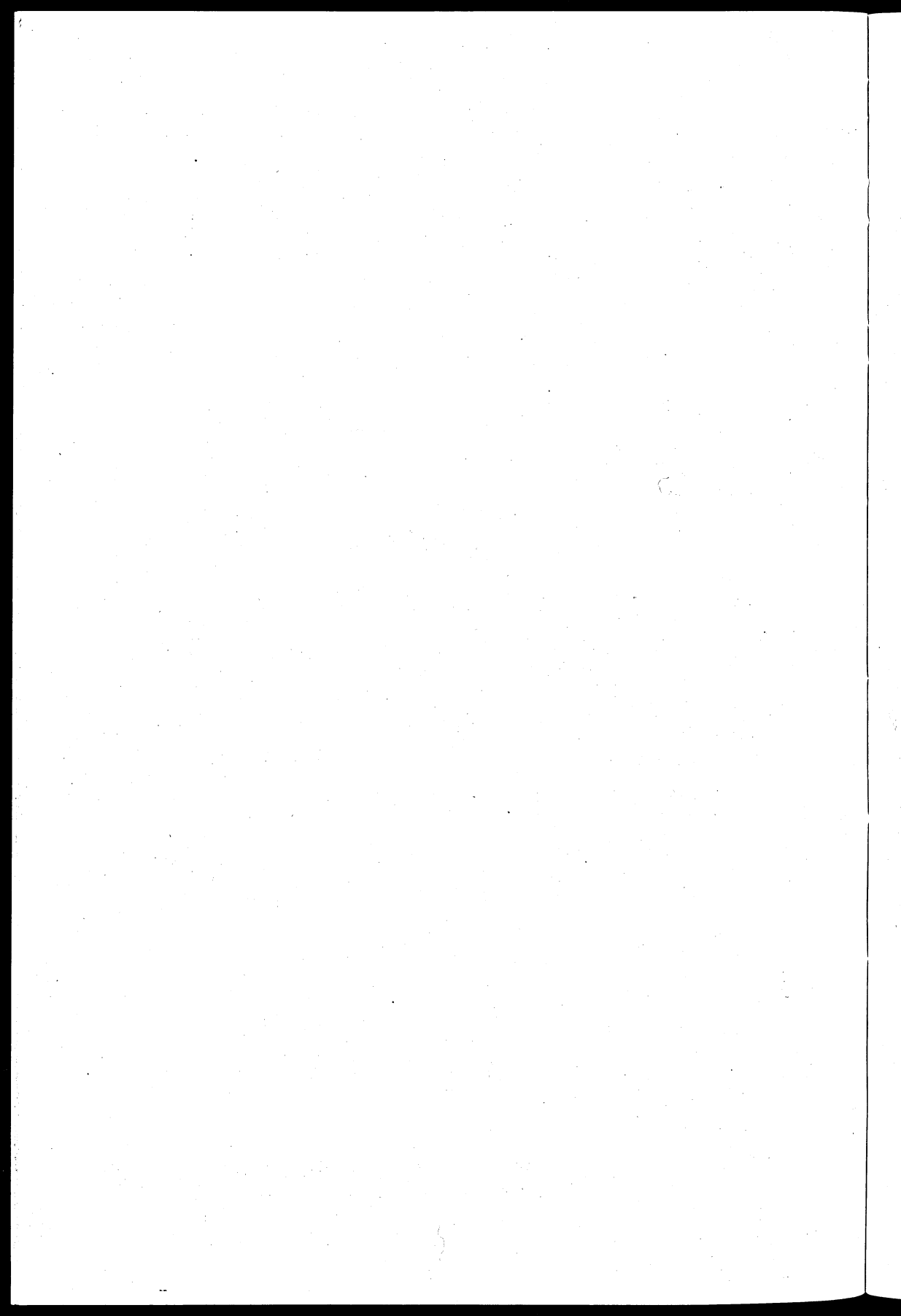
villages, e.g. at present general schools, doctors' consulting rooms, local administrative authorities can be reached by foot from most tanyas within 1/2 - 1 hour. Their supplying with public institutions on a higher level is solved by establishing good communication - regular bus service - with the town. However, all these are far to meet the rapidly increasing requirements of to-day.

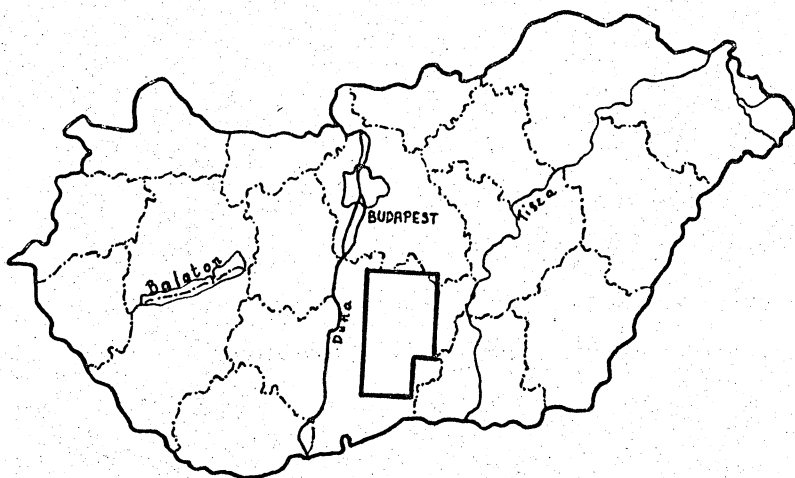
The tanya settlements being unable to keep abreast with technical civilization and cultural development became out-of-date. Owing to the satisfying income tanya population of the vine- and fruit growing co-operatives is tied to the tanyas as yet, but mostly the older generation. Younger people swarm out from the tanya world to towns at a high rate and seek for non-agrarian working places. On tanyas in cropland areas this process has spread among middle aged people as well and so affected a higher proportion of the population.

In a national average our tanya population decreased nearly to its half between 1949 and 1960. In this period in 23 villages out of the 48 villages of the studied area - that is nearly 50 percent - the number of population decreased. This decrease was however very low - 8-12 percent; migration exceeding significantly the natural increase of population could be observed only in 5 villages. On the other hand, 50 percent of the villages in the studied area showed a slow increase of population. Most of these villages are favourably situated concerning the communication and younger people can reach their industrial or other - non-agrarian - working places in the town by commuting.

Villages of the studied area are poorly industrialized. Important industrial enterprises can be found only in the towns - Kecskemét, Szeged, Kiskunhalas; they have a labour attracting effect on villages with good communication facilities too. Commuting however is soon followed by moving to the town - i.e. by a permanent transmigration. In the majority of tanya-villages the proportion of agricultural labourers is above 75-80

percent. Transmigration is connected with a rapid ageing process. Ageing of agricultural population is characteristic of the entire region, local differences can be observed only in the rate of the process. In this region an average of 13-16 percent of the tanya population is 60 years old or more; this proportion is higher - 19-21 percent - only in 3 villages. Even if ageing and transmigration increases, survival of the present tanya-system for at least 15-20 years can be expected even with the most out-of-date tanyas in cropland areas. And the tanya system in vine- and fruit growing areas appear to have an even much longer duration. The task of our settlement policy is to help to co-ordinate settlement pattern with producing system as soon as our developing agricultural production takes a more definite shape. This aim can be attained by concentrating the tanya population in more closed, grouped settlements. One of the earlier conceptions of the settlement policy - to concentrate tanya population in towns - does not seem to be a practical method. This conception cannot bring about a general solution owing to the limited capacity of towns for accepting agrarian population, the connection between working places and homes of the agrarian population and the great distance from the sites of production. At present our settlement policy endeavours to promote with all possible means the gradual elimination of the tanya system and in its place the development of village-like, closed settlements in groups. At the same time it keeps abreast with the local interest of production and also takes into consideration the role of the tanya in production existing at various degrees in the different regions and surviving probably for a considerable time.





The investigated tanya area of the Danube-Tisza-Mid-Region.

