



NOWA HUTA – BETWEEN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE CITY. PART I: THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A SOCIALIST UTOPIA

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Summary

The aim of this study is to introduce the phenomenon that is Nowa Huta, which since 1951 has been one of Krakow's districts, although in 1949 it was planned as a separate city – a symbol of socialist construction in the People's Republic of Poland. The plans adopted by the communist authorities to rebuild Poland were centred on the development of heavy industry. Hence, it was decided to build a steel and metallurgical plant northeast of Krakow. This decision was met with protests from the inhabitants of the villages being redeveloped, as they were not only forcibly displaced, but received low compensation for the fertile black soil. The first residents of Nowa Huta were people coming from rural areas. They formed a mixture of habits and views with different, sometimes foreign, traditions and customs. This syncretism of customs, culture and education gave rise to tensions which were also exacerbated by separation from family oversight. This created a phenomenon called 'double background'. In addition to this was the upbringing in the Catholic faith. The people of Nowa Huta demanded the construction of a temple, which did not line up with the plans of those in power to create a God-free city here. This tension escalated in April 1960, when in defence of the cross they clashed with the security forces. In the end, the church was not built, but the cross standing at the intersection of Mayakovsky and Marx streets remained intact. Nowa Huta is a special place also for its unique architecture, and its self-sufficiency – kindergartens, schools, health centres and shops are all within walking distance. It is also distinguished by the greenery of the parks, meadows and trees growing between the blocks.

Keywords

Nowa Huta • social realism • propaganda • industrialisation • villages prior to Nowa Huta • the clash over the cross • double background • greenery

1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to introduce, mainly to foreign audiences, including urban planners, historians and cultural scientists, to the phenomenon of Nowa Huta, which has been one of Krakow's districts since 1951, even though it was originally planned as a separate city. On 28 July 1949, the first diggers drove into the fields of the villages near

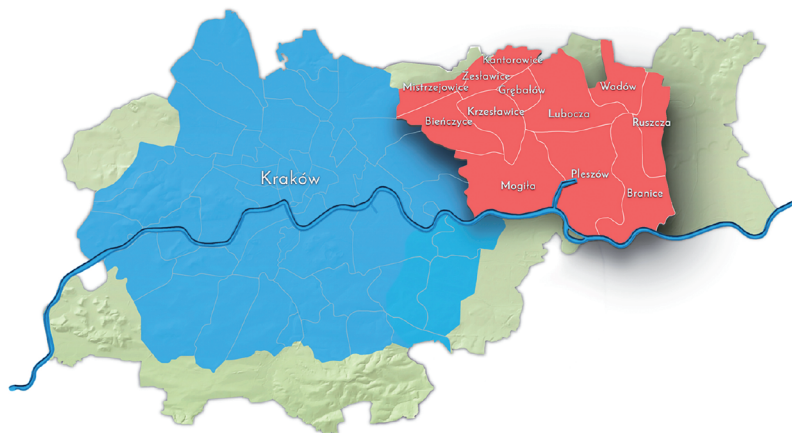
Krakow, and the 60th Youth Brigade of the ‘Service to Poland’¹ entered. And so – according to the propaganda of the time – there arose ‘a symbol of socialist construction in the People’s Republic of Poland, a living monument to the unshakeable brotherhood of the Polish nation and the peoples of the Soviet Union!’ [Wachowski 1971].

The authors have looked at the fascinating phenomenon that Nowa Huta has become over several decades of Polish history. They put particular emphasis on the stages of formation and activity of this urban-industrial organism (part I) and on the exploitation of the potential of this entity after the political and systemic changes that took place between 1945 and 1989 (part II).

Nowa Huta is a unique place not only because of its communist era ambience, but also because of the greenery of the parks, meadows and trees growing between the blocks, which attracts young people [Łyżczarz 2020]. Contemporary lovers of the place see its wonderful architecture, spacious flats, space providing comfortable living conditions, and value its proximity to nature. Indeed, shops, health centres, nurseries, kindergartens and schools are all within easy reach. The People’s Theatre (Teatr Ludowy), the Museum of Nowa Huta, the C.K. Norwid Cultural Centre, the Łaźnia Nowa Theatre, the Nowa Huta Cultural Centre and other smaller cultural, entertainment and recreational institutions offer interesting and active ways of spending time without the effort of commuting to the Krakow’s city centre. The Nowa Huta Meadows and the Reservoir are an equally valuable attraction. The area is full of parks, playgrounds, squares and cycle paths where one can relax, play with children or take a walk with their pets. Owning a dog or cat was, and still is, important to the residents, which is why a plethora of quadrupeds is spotted on the streets. Settling in the XVIII District, as Nowa Huta is officially called, is also backed by numerous transport facilities. For several years now, road and rail connections have been successively modernised, reducing travel time both in the direction of the city centre and the Balice airport, as well as to Katowice, Warsaw or Rzeszów. However, not always was this the case. For a long time, there was no connection even with Krakow, because in the first years of construction this was not the priority, while actually this should have been the starting point for the integration of the population. The first tram line between Nowa Huta and Krakow was not opened until 7 November 1952. It was then that the newly built track from Mogiłskie Roundabout to the Administrative Centre of the Lenin Steelworks (HiL) was opened for the line no. 5 [Pierwszy wóz z Krakowa do Kombinatu wyruszył w dniu wczorajszym, 1955²].

¹ The General Organisation ‘Służba Polsce’ (Service to Poland, SP) was a state paramilitary organisation operating between 1948 and 1955, which brought together young people aged 16–21. Its aim was to persuade this age group to support the changes underway in the country and prepare new cadres to join the ranks of the Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR). Its members not only received combat training and took part in propaganda courses, but were also used as a workforce in, among other things, the rebuilding of Warsaw, the construction of Nowa Huta and the draining of the Żuławny region.

² The first carriage from Krakow to the Combine left yesterday, 1955.



Source: <https://www.poczetkrakowski.pl/granice-krakowa/>

Fig. 1. Boundaries of the city in 1951, after the expansion of the area due to the completion of the Nowa Huta development plan

Across many dimensions, Nowa Huta fulfils the principles of the contemporary idea of the ‘15-minute city’ [Słomka 2022]. As is evident, this is not a new concept, as the Nowa Huta planners led by Tadeusz Ptaszycki were already guided by the category of self-sufficiency [Kobylarczyk]. Historically, the first residents of Nowa Huta were reluctant to travel to Krakow, seeing it as a long journey, given that they had everything they needed nearby [Miasto gniewu i nadziei: Nowa Huta 2007³]. Such isolationism was in line with the communist authorities – as it was supposed to foster the idea of creating a ‘new society’⁴ but also to prevent outbreaks of discontent and, consequently, the need to suppress potential riots. This theory was confirmed during the pacification of the district’s population after the outbreak of riots in defence of the cross in April 1960. Nowa Huta was supposed to be ‘a city of no God’, but its inhabitants demanded the construction of a church. Years of efforts and petitions came to nothing. The change came after 1956, when, in the wake of the so-called Thaw,⁵ the intensity of anti-church efforts temporarily

³ City of anger and hope: Nowa Huta 2007.

⁴ Members of the ‘new society’ were supposed to identify with the ruling party’s policy, display an attitude of servitude towards the nation, have organisational skills, show commitment to the social collectivity, as well as adopt an atheistic mindset, source: *Partia – państwo – społeczeństwo*, ed. R. Dudek, Z. Siembirowicz, Warsaw 1978, 243–245.

⁵ The term ‘Thaw’ is used in Polish history to describe the years 1953–1957, when after the death of Joseph Stalin the repressive policies of the ruling party were softened. Some of the crimes of the Stalinist period were condemned, some political prisoners were released as part of the so-called Amnesty, discredited officials were removed from power, censorship was curtailed, private business was permitted in the economy, procedures for travelling abroad were deregulated, socialist realism in art was abandoned. Then, in October 1956 there was a change in the party leadership and Władysław Gomułka became the First Secretary of the PZPR, who brought the changes to a halt already in 1957. The name itself comes from the title of Ilya Erenburg’s 1954 novel.

eased. The Miastoprojekt Design Office prepared a plan for the location of the church on the C-1 residential area, at the intersection of Mayakovsky and Marx Streets. Committed to this idea, the residents of Nowa Huta set up a Church Construction Committee and began collecting voluntary contributions. On 17 March 1957, a wooden cross was erected there. However, the communists, having brought the situation in the country under control, withdrew their permission for the Nowa Huta church and decided that a school would be built on the site. The Church Construction Committee was accused of financial embezzlement and disbanded, while the funds collected were handed over to the School District Authority in Krakow to be used for school construction. On 27 April 1960 the cross was removed, which triggered massive resistance from residents. Police with dogs were deployed to disperse the gathered people. Violent fights began, during which the militia used firearms. Faced with the superiority of the security forces, the defenders gave way, but the cross remained in place.⁶ The women of Nowa Huta played a major role in this heroic defence, to whom is dedicated a point on the virtual ‘Trail of Women of Krakow – Cracovian Women’ [Chłosta-Sikorska 2022].



Photo by Henryk Hermanowicz, inv. no. MHK-2739-N-2, in the collection of the Museum of Krakow

Fig. 2. Construction of a block of flats in one of the residential areas in Nowa Huta, 1950s/60s

⁶ For a broader discussion of this topic, see, i.a.: W. Paduchowski, *Karły pod krzyżem. Nowohucki kwiecień '60*, Krakow 2021; A. Kozłowska, *Walka o krzyż – historia konfliktu społeczno-politycznego związane z budowa kościoła w Nowej Huty*, in: *Dziedzictwo kulturowe Nowej Huty w rozwoju obszaru strategicznego Kraków-Wschód. Materiały konferencyjne, 13–15 marca 1997*, Krakow 1997; R. Terlecki, M. Lasota, J. Szarek, *Nowa Huta – miasto walki i pracy*, Krakow 2002; J.L. Franczyk, *Na fundamencie krzyża. Kościół katolicki w Nowej Hucie 1949–1989*, Krakow 2004; R. Bober, *Krzyże w „Mieście bez Boga”. Organizacja parafialna w Nowej Hucie w okresie działalności kard. Karola Wojtyły w latach 1962–1978*, Krakow 2006.

2. Historical background – propaganda

Krakow was liberated by the Red Army under Marshal Ivan Konev on 18 January 1945. Liberated, not freed, as the German occupation was replaced by the Soviet occupation⁷. With little damage to the city, it became a place where new residents, including artists, craftsmen and scholars, arrived in large numbers [Chłosta-Sikorska 2016]. Almost immediately began the reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure, including bridges, roads, water and gas pipelines or power grids, as well as services, health care and education system. Classes at the Jagiellonian University and the Mining Academy (now the AGH University of Science and Technology) were resumed and aligned with the political and economic priorities of the new government. A rebuilt Poland needed steel, but the Silesian steel mills were unable to meet the growing demand. Furthermore, the rhetoric of German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who did not recognise the border on the Oder and Lusatian Neisse [Bartnicka 2014], caused continuing uncertainty among the resident settlers, emerging from ‘West German revisionism’. It was these factors, among others, that, according to Hilary Minec (Minister of Industry and Trade in 1944–1949), were to determine the plans for the location of the new plant. Another reason for the lower efficiency of the Silesian industry was the exploitation of Silesian mines by the USSR – a fact that was kept in silence by the Polish authorities. Eventually, after consultations with the USSR, an area northeast of Krakow was chosen as the location for the new metallurgical and steel combine. However, this site was not a barren wasteland. About 30 villages were located there (including Mogiła, Pleszów, Bieńczyce, Mistrzejowice, Zesławice, Kantorowice, Grębałów, Lubocza, Wadów, Ruszcza, Branice). More importantly, these were settlements with a documented rich history, located on fertile black soil and still thriving [Klaś 2016].

The first records of these villages near Krakow date back to the Neolithic. Finds attesting to the settlement of the area of today’s Nowa Huta come from this period. People were already surrounded by animals at that time and became increasingly attached to the land. They raised goats, sheep, cattle, pigs and domesticated dogs. The animal kingdom was for them a reflection of the human world order, with its counterparts of power, society and destiny. Culture and art also drew from the animal world. A sign of Nowa Huta’s earliest history is Wanda’s Mound, which was probably erected between the 7th and 8th centuries. According to legend, the 14-metre-high structure is the grave of Princess Wanda, who committed suicide by jumping into the Vistula to avoid marrying a German prince [Chłosta-Sikorska 2023]. However, according to sources, it was a place of pagan worship [Niemiec 2016]. Nowadays, it is one of the favourite walking destinations for Nowa Huta residents. There is a monument made in 1890 according to Jan Matejko’s design ‘in the form of a prism made of red marble, topped with a hemisphere on which sat an eagle made of white marble. The front face of the plinth bears the inscription ‘Wanda’ and crossed sword and sliver’ [Grochowska 2019].

⁷ In the *Encyclopaedia of Krakow*, the events of the January offensive of the Red Army were under the entry of ‘liberation from the German occupation’ – *Encyklopedia Krakowa*, Warsaw–Krakow 2000, 710–711.

In the Middle Ages, the spatial arrangement of these rural settlements was composed of fields and roads that linked villages, churches, farm and manor buildings. Residents shared canals and woodlands. Peasants lived much closer to the animals than members of other social states, as they made their living by working the land and farming. They often lived together with the animals – the homestead would be in the same hut. Animals were one of the basics of survival for them, a source of food and help in their daily work [Kaleta 2017].

In 1222 a Cistercian monastery was founded in the village of Mogiła. It is worth noting that the monks were pioneers in the field of economy and husbandry, especially in horned cattle (cows and oxen), horses, pigs, goats, sheep (their wool was used in the monastery weaving workshops) and poultry (hens, ducks, geese, turkeys and capons) [Zdanek 2001]. The monastic estate grew, and in the 16th century it included 20 villages, six manors, forests, meadows, pastures, fish ponds and beehives [Bojęś-Białasik 2017]. Similar agricultural activities were carried out by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, to which Krzesławice, Grębałów and Kantorowice belonged, while Lubocza belonged to the Norbertine Sisters of Zwierzyniec [Niemiec 2020]. Other villages were held by the knights: Ruszcza and Branice by the Gryfit-Branicki family, Pleszów by the famous restaurateur Wierzynek, Kościelniki by the Morsztyn and Wodzicki families, Łuczanowice by the Żeleński and Mycielski families, and Krzesławice by Jan Matejko. They also farmed and raised animals in their manors [Klaś 2016]. Few documents from those times have survived. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, livestock breeding was significantly hampered by animal diseases. In December 1871, an epidemic of rinderpest, a severe viral disease of cattle, hit the Krakow area. The city authorities declared a three-mile 'plague district', which also included Mistrzejowice. In 1902, swine fever broke out in the villages near Krakow [Wykaz panujących w Galicyi chorób zaraźliwych zwierzęcych, zestawiony na podstawie sprawozdań c.k. Starostw przedłożonych od 27. października do 3 listopada 1902]⁸, as well as swine erysipelas (1906) [Wykaz panujących w Galicyi chorób zaraźliwych zwierzęcych, zestawiony na podstawie sprawozdań c.k. Starostw przedłożonych od 20 do 27 maja 1906]⁹, anthrax (1907) [Wykaz panujących w Galicyi chorób zaraźliwych zwierzęcych, zestawiony na podstawie sprawozdań c.k. Starostw, przedłożonych od 22 do 29 września 1907]¹⁰, scabies in horses (1911) [Wykaz panujących w Galicyi chorób zaraźliwych zwierzęcych, zestawiony na podstawie sprawozdań c.k. Starostw przedłożonych od 15 do 22 kwietnia 1911]¹¹ and other epidemics. Emerging animal diseases forced the authorities to enact some regulations. Compulsory registration of horned cattle was introduced in

⁸ List of contagious animal diseases in Galicia, compiled on the basis of reports from the Crown District Offices (c.k. Starostwo) submitted from 27 October to 3 November 1902.

⁹ List of contagious animal diseases in Galicia, compiled on the basis of reports from the Crown District Offices (c.k. Starostwo) submitted from 20 to 27 May 1906.

¹⁰ List of contagious animal diseases in Galicia, compiled from reports of the Crown District Offices (c.k. Starostwo) submitted from 22 to 29 September 1907.

¹¹ List of contagious animal diseases in Galicia, compiled from reports of the Crown District Offices (c.k. Starostwo) submitted from 15 to 22 April 1911.

1880. It was necessary to report any changes, set up a register and mark cattle according to a system based on territorial division [Dziennik Ustaw i Rozporządzeń Krajowych dla Królestwa Galicyi i Lodomeryi wraz z Wielkiem Księstwem Krakowskiem. Rocznik 1881]¹². Various medical preparations were used for treatment ‘in the form of sodium sulphate, antimony, camphor, oak bark and alum. The disease was prevented by inducing abscesses, inoculation with infectious material’ [Mataniak 2017]. Looking through this brief but significant slice of the history of the villages near Krakow where Nowa Huta was built, one can see that they were not ‘fallow land’ – as the communist propaganda presented it to the public. They had a centuries-old tradition and the inhabitants were heavily involved in their flourishing by living close to nature.

3. Unrealistic plans

This huge, flat and easy-to-develop area was a tasty morsel for Soviet and Polish architects planning the industrialisation of the People’s Republic of Poland with flair. The ground was robust, so large and heavy buildings could be erected there. However, high groundwater levels remained a problem, as the area was a former Vistula riverbed – peat bogs were an obstacle that saved the Meadows of Nowa Huta from being developed. The presence of rivers, including the largest one, the Vistula, was also favourable for such a location of a large metallurgical complex, since steelworks need huge amounts of water for steel production. In addition, the area was well communicated – three main railways ran nearby: eastern, western and northern, making it possible to quickly transport the materials necessary for the construction of both the steelworks and the city, and then export the steel and finished products. These materials were, for example, iron ore from Kryvyi Rih in the USSR, or coal from mines in Poland. The fact that the surrounding area was densely populated was also important, so the workforce could be found locally, while Krakow, thanks to its scientific potential (the Mining Academy or the Jagiellonian University), could educate senior technical and auxiliary staff who were employed in the plant under construction [Salwiński 1999]. However, it would be futile to search in the vicinity of Krakow for iron ore, coal or other minerals necessary for the steelmaking processes. All this had to be brought in from Silesia or the USSR. The lack of electricity was also a concern, but between the individual consumer and industry – industry always had priority. This is why so often it was decided to disconnect entire districts or smaller towns, not to mention villages, from the power supply. This was one of the social costs of progress too.

4. Start of works

Taking a look at Nowa Huta from today’s perspective, it is important to remember that it was planned as a city of 100,000 inhabitants, independent and even representing an

¹² Journal of Laws and National Ordinances for the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria together with the Grand Duchy of Krakow. Yearbook 1881.

antithesis of the old, intelligentsia Krakow. In the first phase of design and construction, it was intended to provide housing for the workers of the emerging metallurgical combine, which on 21 January 1954 was named after Lenin – on the thirtieth anniversary of his death [Kombinat w Nowej Hucie nazwany imieniem Lenina 1954]¹³. Its construction was one of the largest investments in post-war Poland. When the communists seized power, they decided to expand industry, and metallurgy was to be its most prominent branch. Despite the energy deficit with which the People's Republic of Poland was struggling, steel was needed for the production of machinery and weapons. The construction of the plant and the city began in 1949, but social, religious and ethical challenges arose right from the start. The current inhabitants had to be resettled and the villages were destroyed. The expropriation of peasants from their farms began [Decree 1949]. This was a very difficult process. Farmers who had lived for generations in these villages outside Krakow did not want to sell their land, especially as the price offered was very low and they owned highly fertile black soil¹⁴. However, the ruling party did not countenance them, the priority was to implement the plans. It did not matter that they were destroying the centuries-old order, that the peasants would have to switch to a different way of life, and get rid of their possessions, including numerous livestock. When the first diggers, trucks and ploughs entered the villages, and with them came the workers, the harvest season was approaching. Grain was not allowed to be reaped, and was destroyed by heavy equipment. Orchards and home gardens were also levelled with the ground. One resident recalls: 'the farmers would go to the party, asking them to wait at least until the harvest. For their hectares of land, their lifetime's work, they received the equivalent of a watch. (...) Marianna had a piece of land with a gazebo – they didn't even ask, they levelled it with a bulldozer, built the 303 Squadron residential area. They made avenues and a tramway on the site of Marysia's inn. They asphalted the highroad and named it Central Street. They converted the graveyard of the dead of the Spanish flu, to which one walked through the grain, into a park in the middle of the housing estate. A National Council sprouted up on Mum's field. And where Marianna Zając's family house had been, they put up blocks of flats' [Kobylarczyk 2009]. The lack of respect for hard work sparked resistance. People saw in the destruction of God's gifts, especially grain, elements of a war on religion, so they got into fights with the workers. Alojzy Cyrulik, one of the first Nowa Huta engineers, recalls that they often threatened the builders by shouting: 'Go back where you came from... We will not move from here... We will not let Nowa Huta be built on our fields... Get out, you Bolshevik mercenaries' [Cyrulik 1966]. The government were not bothered by this resistance and removed the people by force, and called on the militiamen for help. Therefore, more than 4,000 farmsteads were expropriated quite quickly. Animals also suffered. The peasants had to quickly dispose of their possessions – horses, cows, pigs, sheep, goats, rabbits or poultry. Some of them were sold, and others were killed

¹³ Combine in Nowa Huta named after Lenin 1954.

¹⁴ The price per 1 m² ranged from 30 to 65 groszy, depending on the size of the farm. The larger it was, the less was paid, M. Choma et al., *Huta im. Tadeusza Sendzimira S.A. w Krakowie 1949–1999*, Krakow 1999, p. 179.

by selling the meat or using it for their own consumption [Wachowski 1971]. However, it was impossible to save much of it, as refrigerators had not yet been heard of at the time – they appeared in Poland in the early 1950s. According to the memoirs, many frightened animals escaped: ‘my mum kept pigs, we had three dogs too, and they came in, opened the pigsty, the kennels, all the animals started running away (they also had chickens, turkeys, ducks, the great-granddaughter adds), until today I still see them running through the fields’ [Klik 2019].

5. Apparent alternative

People living in villages near Krakow could move to newly built blocks of flats, or buy a house elsewhere. Most often they were offered land in post-German territories, but almost no one wanted to accept such an offer, which was regarded as degradation and a kind of exile. The lack of legal regulation of land ownership further exacerbated the settlers’ fears. As a result, many of the displaced peasants from these villages did not know how to cope when they were forced to start their lives anew without notice. Some of them found employment in the construction industry as carters with their own horse-drawn carriages transporting building materials, as it was often necessary to get raw materials to muddy areas and horses fared much better than lorries. Others, as unskilled labourers, laid layer upon layer of bricks and poured foundations for new apartment blocks erected on land that was no longer theirs. Most, however, did not want to see their homeland disappear. From 1949 onwards, the world of these inhabitants of 30 or so relatively prosperous villages shrank as fast as Nowa Huta grew. In the end, it became an accessory to the big city. Thoughtlessness and tragedy of these events are also evidenced by archival photographs. They depict many blocks of flats being erected, with peasants working on the land beside them, horses pulling ploughs, harrows and carts, or cows grazing¹⁵. In spite of external pressure, those who remained living on the border between the village and the city managed to preserve their identity in houses surrounded by patches of land on one side and high blocks of flats on the other. They were further integrated by the shock of the construction of Nowa Huta. Aside from a deep sense of injustice, the forced rupture between village and city was the most peculiar experience of the inhabitants of the pre-Nowa Huta villages.

6. Experiment on a living organism of society

Propaganda portrayed Nowa Huta as an ideal place to live, while architects envisaged it as a place of after-work rest for those employed at the Lenin Steelworks and other workplaces. To persuade settlers to live here, the communists used a system of rewards aimed mainly at the young. Many people lived in difficult conditions – cramped, without basic amenities such as sanitary facilities, sometimes even without electricity. This made them decide to move. Moving to a two-room flat with access to running water,

¹⁵ For example, photographs by Robert Kosieradzki in the collection of the Museum of Krakow.

a bathroom, a cooker or central heating was a huge change for the better [Filemonowicz n.d.]. Living and working in the new city was propagandised as a dream come true, a trouble-free idyll supported by the party. Through leaflets, posters, films, articles in the press, radio broadcasts and meetings, the young people were encouraged to join in this great work of building a magnificent enterprise. They were offered a unique chance to change their former rural lives, as they were called – mediocre or even primitive – into urban lives – modern and comfortable. They were offered the opportunity to acquire a profession, to work for a decent wage allowing them to live in favourable conditions surrounded by nature, and consequently to enjoy unprecedented social advancement and personal success.

7. Summary

The communist authorities' plans to rebuild Poland rested on the development of heavy industry. The decision to build the then largest metallurgical plant near Krakow was met with protests from the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, including Mogiła, Pleszów, Bieńczyce, Mistrzejowice, Zesławice, Kantorowice, Grębałów, Lubocza, Wadów, Ruszczka and Branice. The construction of the plant and the city of one hundred thousand residents meant that the previous population had to be evicted and their homes demolished. The indigenous inhabitants were also reluctant; the authorities paid unrealistically low rates for the taken farms, which were located on fertile black soil. The fact that the crops that were still in the fields were destroyed by the earthworks was additionally resented by the villagers.

The first residents of Nowa Huta were people coming from rural areas. They formed a mixture of habits and views with different, sometimes foreign, traditions and customs. This syncretism of customs, culture and education gave rise to tensions which were also exacerbated by separation from family oversight. The first Nowa Huta residents indeed maintained the values they had taken from their family environment, but at the same time they adopted new patterns of behaviour. This created 'double background' problems. They were often unable to combine aspirations for modern life with the cultivation of rural lifestyle features. This was all the more difficult as they lost support in the form of family, friends or religion [Chłosta-Sikorska 2019]. The editors of the 'Voice of Nowa Huta' joked about their habits: 'The greatest misery in Huta is that you can't sleep on the stove' [Fraszki 1962]. Anecdotes still circulate about how they kept rabbits and poultry in bathrooms, pigs and goats in cellars, and pigeons on balconies, burned parquet boards in cookers, and drained water from radiators to use it for laundry [Hołda 2010]. It is now difficult to assess to what extent these stories actually took place, and whether they were simply the fruit of propaganda efforts aimed at building a new model – the progressive communist man being the antithesis of the religious and ignorant peasant.

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