

## **INFORMAL RELATIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY, PATRONAGE AND CLIENTELISM**

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### **CLIENTELISM AS THE HIGHEST STAGE OF IMPERIALISM\***

The phenomenon of clientelism, of political patronage, which has been attracting the attention of ever more historians specializing in various epochs, may concern not only physical persons but also corporate bodies, including states. The researcher may frown at the word “timeless” but he uses such concepts as “power”, “dependence”, “independence” or “war” every day, applying them to various epochs and cultures for the sake of comparison. The question can be reversed: when we analyze differences between comparable phenomena we can see them better if we examine changes brought about by time and differences resulting from the place where a phenomenon has occurred. The patron–client relationship is one of those ubiquitous but changeable phenomena.

However, what exactly are we discussing? There are many definitions, some of which are extremely complex. I will choose the two simplest ones. One says that the patron–client relationship is a relatively durable relation between unequal persons in which the more powerful partner guarantees protection to the weaker one, in return for which he may demand services from the latter. In other words, this is an informal contractual relationship between persons of unequal status and capability which imposes various kinds of mutual obligations on the partners. The

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minimum is protection and generosity on one side and loyalty on the other. This relationship is based on a personal, face-to-face contract and is continuous<sup>1</sup>.

"Persons", "partners", "face-to-face"? Must it be a contract between people, between individuals? It was realized already in ancient Rome, which gave us patterns and the terminology of the phenomenon, that a community, a city, a region, a state can be a client.

Much attention has been paid to clientelism in ancient Rome<sup>2</sup>. One can meditate which modern examples can be included in the same group as the ancient ones, but this would be a futile occupation, though what comes to mind is the relationship between the Italian duchies and the Habsburgs; Savoy steering a middle course between two patron dynasties, the Habsburgs and the Valois, after the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559); the Italian republics set up by revolutionary France; the duchies and kingdoms which Napoleon gave to, or created for, his family. All these were ephemeral, save perhaps for Savoy which for centuries deftly steered a middle course between the rivaling powers. But how long was it a client?

It is only contemporary times, especially the rivalry between the great powers after World War II, that gave birth to the problem of a world-wide clientelist network. The political scientist J. Galtung has proposed to define imperialism as a structural relationship between the élites of developed and developing countries<sup>3</sup>. Galtung regards the developed countries as "the Center"; the backward countries — I reject here the politically correct but imprecise and optimistic term "developing countries" — are called "peripheries" by him. What he has in mind is, of course, the center of power and the peripheries which are an area far from the decision-making center, that is the subjects or the people ruled by the center. Both terms refer to the theory of international economy which uses the concepts of the "center" or "core" in the sense of regions which dominate in technology and trade. This

<sup>1</sup> Definitions by Wolfgang Reinhard and Sydelle Silverman quoted after A. Maćzak, *Klientela. Nieformalne systemy władzy w Polsce i Europie XVI-XVII w.* (*Clients. Informal Systems of Power in Poland and Europe in the 16th-17th Centuries*), Warszawa (1994), 2000, p. 10. See also J. Tarkowski, *Socjologia świata polityki (Sociology of the Political World)*, vol. 2, *Patroni i klienci (Patrons and Clients)*, Warszawa 1994.

<sup>2</sup> E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae (264-70 BC)*, Oxford 1958.

<sup>3</sup> J. Galtung, *A Structural Theory of Imperialism*, "Journal of Peace Research", II, 1971.

seems to be correct for it is especially in the Third World that the state is treated as an enterprise and political power mainly as a source of profits<sup>4</sup>. Galtung's idea can be interpreted in a radically anti-imperialist spirit; its political accent is quite clear. I think that this is the reason why it is rarely discussed or is even ignored in political literature<sup>5</sup>.

Galtung believes that there is a permanent social conflict between the "periphery in the periphery" (symbolized as pP) and the "center in the periphery" (cP), that is, the power center. But the cC and the cP (the élites of the dominant state and of the dependent state) are linked by a certain community of interests and this community is of interest to us here for it can be interpreted as a specific large-scale clientelist relationship. Let us add that this is a complex phenomenon for, even if the press information is exaggerated, it is beyond doubt that a large part of the financial resources transferred by the First World (including international institutions) to the poor countries disappears in the pockets of local dictators and dignitaries<sup>6</sup>.

It is worth recalling the proposal made, with mainly Sicily in mind, by Jane and Peter Schneider<sup>7</sup>, who have suggested that modernization should be distinguished from development. Societies which are modernizing themselves without developing their economy are in an equal way succumbing to the influence

<sup>4</sup> Cf. F. C. Lane, *Profits from Power. Readings in Protection Rent and Violence-Controlling Enterprise*, Albany 1979; for a slightly different approach see A. Maçzak, *Der Staat als Unternehmen. Adel und Amtsträger in Polen und Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit*, München 1989 (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Vorträge 10).

<sup>5</sup> This has been done by N. L. Gonzales, *Patron-Client Relationships at the International Level*, in: *Structure and Process*, 1972, pp. 179–206; C. Shoemaker, J. Spinner, *Patron-Client State Relationships. Multilateral Crises in the Nuclear Age*, New York 1984; M. J. Gasiorowski, *U. S. Foreign Policy and the Shah. Building a Client State in Iran*, Ithaca-London 1991; M. Efrat, J. Bercovitich (eds.), *Superpowers and Client States in the Middle East. The Imbalance of Influence*, London-New York 1991. But compare B. Badié, *L'Etat importé. L'occidentalisation de l'ordre politique*, Paris 1992, who however omits the pP element, which is very important in Galtung's model (see below).

<sup>6</sup> It is an open secret that a large part of the financial means transferred to Western charitable institutions for aid to the developing countries is by many foundations spent on administrative costs, service trips and the like.

<sup>7</sup> J. Schneider, P. Schneider, *Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily*, New York 1976, pp. 3–4; cf. also P. Schneider, J. Schneider, E. Hansen, *Modernization and Development: The Role of Regional Elites and Non-corporate Groups in the European Mediterranean*, in: S. W. Schmidt, L. Guasti, C. H. Lande, J. C. Scott (eds.), *Friends. Followers and Factions. A Reader in Political Clientelism*, Berkeley 1977, p. 474.

of the ideology and lifestyle of the dominant metropolis as to its commodity and financial markets. As Jane and Peter Schneider have stressed, a developing society tries to rid itself, at least partly, of the influence of developed centers in order to create a more diversified economy and have greater control of its natural and human resources. However, since this requires an accumulation of financial resources, it can be a slow process. A society which is modernizing itself without a parallel economic growth and proper social processes becomes wide open to (one could say exposed to) the extension of the gray zone between the *publicum* and the *privatum* and in modern conditions this means the expansion of clientelism and corruption. Jane and Peter Schneider say that modernization of this kind is a fruit of contacts between rich and poor regions; although it can be profitable to certain groups of interests in both regions, it preserves the basic relationship of superordination and subordination between them. This may mean a marked rise in the living standards, especially of the privileged classes. In a society which is modernizing itself, the élite is vitally interested in a lasting subordination to foreign power holders, while in a developing society (or a society striving after development) the élite's interest lies in elastic links with international markets on the basis of economic differences and greater autonomy. Both types of élites, even though their interests are contradictory, may coexist in the same place and at the same time, competing with each other. The first type (the Schneiders call it the dependence élite) has the upper hand. Development stimuli stand no chance of success if local intellectuals, free professions and businessmen are loyal clients of the propertied classes, most probably in the metropolis, and these are vitally interested in preserving the system of dependence. I think that this argumentation is more fitting for the post-colonial countries and many regions in Latin America than for Sicily, in relation to which it was developed<sup>8</sup>.

Though this argumentation sounds convincing, a different one can be used. In a theoretical introduction to his monograph on American-Iranian relations another American, Mark J. G a s i o r o w s k i, says that cliency relationship is a mutually benefi-

<sup>8</sup> On the other hand these authors have a different notion of colonialism (economy of the colonial type) when they write about "the early colonial period" (during which Sicily exported wheat and animal products) and "a later neocolonial period (during which manpower is the principal energy loss)", *ibidem*, pp. x ff.

cial result of negotiations. It concerns mutual exchange of goods and services, aimed at strengthening the security of the patron and the client, something which normally cannot be obtained from other sources. The political stability of the client is of great importance for the patron<sup>9</sup>. The contrast between Gasiorowski's approach and that of the previously mentioned authors is clear, also in the field of terminology. The state-society dyad which, according to Galtung, is characterized by a constant conflict of interests is, according to Gasiorowski, determined by the degree of the state's autonomy, by which he understands the state's independence of society (a polite euphemism for dictatorship). But the case of the Iranian Empire was so glaring that the author's conclusion does not depart much from Galtung's argumentation, even though Gasiorowski uses a specific highbrow social scientist's political jargon and a respective syntax<sup>10</sup>. He says that the Iranian state's high degree of autonomy in the 1960s and 1970s enabled it to operate without the kind of social input that is often provided by such mechanisms as legitimate political parties, popularly elected legislatures, a free press, and local-level political activity.

In the postwar years, after the abolition of Allied occupation (by Russian and American troops), after the period when the Tudeh party and the National Front dominated in the country (the period of Prime Minister Mossadeq), the establishment of a highly autonomous state interrupted the construction of the political dominance of the middle class. The state's policy turned out to be contradictory to social interest, and by deepening the state's autonomy the cliency links with the United States facilitated the outbreak of revolution in 1977-1979<sup>11</sup>.

The state's autonomy is nothing less than dictatorship. What is meant is the sharp conflict between the rulers and the ruled, in other words, the fact that the division of national resources and national income depended on participation in the apparatus of political power. The Iranian example is not inconsistent with the above-mentioned definition of international cliency relationship which lays stress on the intergovernmental, not international, character of such relationship. By a roundabout way we

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<sup>9</sup> M. J. Gasiorowski, *op. cit.* pp. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 197-198.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 223.

have arrived at conclusions which are not incompatible with Galtung's theory.

Let us see how this radically simplified pattern, a pattern which does not play down conflicts but accentuates them, can be applied to the two semi-colonial systems of the cold-war period, the Soviet and the American system<sup>12</sup>. This question is complicated by another factor: the international political and charitable institutions fully financed by the developed countries. According to Galtung, they help in a partial redistribution of resources to the benefit of pP. Although a part of these resources is taken over by the central or local authorities in the poor countries (cP), this aid helps to abolish the exploitation of the pP by the cP and the cC, that is, by the élites of both types of countries. This seems to be the basis of the power of the ruling groups in backward countries. The economic aid granted by international bodies, charitable institutions and individual states eases for some time the supply crisis in the Third World countries<sup>13</sup>. But it is the groups and individuals holding power (cP) that profit most and in the most direct way from this aid. Galtung, however, seems to have forgotten, though he may have done this deliberately, that a client state may have a democratic system or that the protection it gets from a great power may be approved by the majority of a society. The latter situation was probably the lot of countries which without American help would have been overpowered by an external enemy or internal chaos, like Greece in 1945-1948 and South Korea in 1950.

After World War II, especially after 1960 when the number of countries which were really sovereign or only formally sovereign began to soar, the aid granted by the great powers enormously increased its significance as a means of gaining influence in the international forum. It is of secondary importance whether this influence was economic, cultural or strictly political. In analyzing the dyads of subservience to the United States and the Soviet Union Gasiorowski examines both superpowers on the same plane. Without considering the political history of these twenty-five years I only want to point out the differences in the interpre-

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<sup>12</sup> I am using the past tense when speaking of the USSR but the problem of client relations on an international scale has not lost its topicality after the fall of the communist regime in Russia.

<sup>13</sup> I am using the term "the Third World" in the broadest sense.

tation of the problem by the two researchers. Gasiorowski says<sup>14</sup> that the international cliency relationship is a mutually beneficial security-oriented relationship between the governments of two countries which differ greatly in size, wealth and strength they all include a mutual exchange of goods and services and are aimed at increasing the security of the patron and the client.

The cliency instruments used by the patron consist of advice, training, supplies of weapons and equipment to the client whose stability is of essential importance for the patron. The conflict between state and society, a problem stressed by Galtung, is called "a high degree of autonomy" by Gasiorowski<sup>15</sup>. Gasiorowski pushes his political neutrality really far when he says that this high degree of the state's autonomy enabled Iran to operate without legitimate political parties, elected legislatures, a free press and local-level political activity<sup>16</sup>. It is interesting that the state's autonomy is of primary importance in Gasiorowski's view, it is a kind of independent entity, while the manifestations of dictatorship are secondary in his opinion. The emergence of this "highly autonomous" state interrupted the rule of prime minister Mossadeq (1951–1953) who based his rule on the emerging modern middle class (the Tudeh party and the National Front). Finally Gasiorowski states that the USA–Iran cliency relationship deepened Iran's autonomy (scil. with regard to its own society) and facilitated the outbreak of the 1977–1979 revolution<sup>17</sup>. Gasiorowski seems not to be interested in the connection between the cliency relationship and the sudden fall of Mossadeq.

Gasiorowski does not quote Galtung nor does he mention him in his bibliography.

I have dealt with these contrasting interpretations mainly because this has a bearing on the political aspect of patron–client relations. It is worth mentioning yet another interpretation. Christopher C. Shoemaker and John Spinner have examined the patron–client relationship only on the plane of govern-

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<sup>14</sup> M. J. Gasiorowski, *op. cit.* p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 197.

<sup>16</sup> "The Iranian state's high degree of autonomy in the 1960s and 1970s enabled it to operate without the kind of social input that is often provided by such mechanisms as legitimate parties, popularly elected legislatures, a free press, and local-level political activity". The author admits that the state's policy was disadvantageous to society.

<sup>17</sup> M. J. Gasiorowski, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

ments<sup>18</sup>. They lay stress on negotiations concerning the conditions on which this relationship is to be based: the patron and the client are partners, each of whom wants to wrest valuable concessions from the other at the minimum cost<sup>19</sup>. The case of Iran was analogous and the severance of relations was the result of revolution in the client-state, while in Egypt it was the ruling group that changed its orientation. In both cases the patron was caught off guard by the development of events<sup>20</sup>.

Interstate patron-client relationship assumed large proportions after World War II, in particular through the establishment of the system of "people's democracies". Having inherited this system from Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev and his successors went much further geopolitically. In the epoch of ballistic missiles they were active in a much wider area, for as far as prewar operations outside Soviet frontiers are concerned, Joseph Vissarionovich tried to take advantage only of the civil war in Spain.

It is worth recalling the situation in 1939/1940. In the exceptional circumstances which prevailed in the first few months of that period the USSR tried to gain control of the Baltic countries in two stages. In the first stage it forced their governments to make concessions (to agree to the establishment of Red Army bases in their territory); in the second stage it planted collaborators in the Baltic countries and carried out rigged elections. Galtung's scheme cannot be applied in this case. In 1945 the Allies' victory over Germany and Japan enabled the Soviets to create Galtung's system of forced alliances based on the common interests of (unequal) cC and cP partners, the so-called people's democracies. This was an extreme case in Stalin's times for the members of the satellite countries' authorities ran the risk of being brutally disgraced by the cC, that is

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<sup>18</sup> C. C. Shoemaker, J. Spinner, *op. cit.*; in their expanded typology of interstate client relations (Chapter I, pp. 27-44) the authors distinguish "patron-prevalence" from "patron-centric relationship"; the latter means "patron goals of ideological conformity" while the patron's first goal is the client's international solidarity, that is, his full loyalty, but the patron will be more inclined to tolerate the client's independence in his internal matters (*Ibidem*, p. 30).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24; the authors analyze the terms of the agreement between the USSR and Egypt; this is an extremely interesting case if only because the client broke it off.

<sup>20</sup> "U.S. policy makers, not fully understanding the depth of Iran's resentment of its client status, were caught repeatedly off guard by Iran's actions, including the seizure of the hostages", C. C. Shoemaker, J. Spinner, *op. cit.*, p. 25, fn. 4.



the Kremlin, as was proved by the great political trials of that time. What is beyond doubt is that the centers of the satellite countries and the Center were linked by common political and material interests.

There is no need to dwell on the patron states' superiority over the countries dependent on them. What is more interesting is the rules of the clients' game in the two systems. The USSR which was in a state of a permanent subsistence crisis<sup>21</sup> neither intended nor was able to supply its satellites with what these societies needed, that is, food, capital and effective economic counselling. It supplied them with the resources it had, in particular with armaments, which strengthened its strategic presence. Moreover, it organized at its own cost the training of military, political and ideological cadres. The balance of this exchange of goods was usually favourable for the satellite state, that is mainly or exclusively for the cP, for it would be difficult to find a single case of this relationship helping to increase the welfare of the population of a satellite country. It is characteristic that the USSR did not develop systems of social care and health services in the Third World countries dependent on it. Economic and especially military considerations demanded that "joint enterprises" be set up to exploit the client's strategic resources, such as uranium ore or other strategic metals, and also to use the satellite country's technological potential for the development of Soviet industry.

The western powers had similar problems, especially strategic ones, but since they functioned in the conditions of a market economy and parliamentary democracy, they usually, though not always, employed other methods. The fate of the Iranian prime minister, Mossadeq, overthrown by CIA or of Salvador Allende in Chile shows that even a just cold war is not always fair. The political events in Central America show that the problem is extremely complex. Much can also be said about the patronizing strategy of France with regard to its former colonies, especially to the political elites whom the French entrusted with power and whom they sometimes support by their prestige and even by

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<sup>21</sup> I use the term "crisis" in analogy to the post-industrial *crises de subsistance* but in the Soviet system this was a permanent phenomenon linked with the system, so it should not really be called a crisis. Control over goods, access to them play a fundamental role in patron-client relations.

military intervention<sup>22</sup>. These relations cannot however be interpreted in a one-sided way as cliency relations. During the cold war the West intervened mainly when it was afraid of an increase of Soviet influence in the Third World; once this danger receded, many other motives, including the pressure of public opinion, have played an equally strong role as the traditional cliency relations.

What is most interesting for us here is the role of the cP, that is, of the ruling circles in the satellite or generally poorer and dependent countries. The experiences of the second half of the 20th century show that in conditions of tension between the great powers, a dictator or oligarch in a satellite country may be the tail wagging the dog. He will undoubtedly try to negotiate conditions, having in mind mainly the ruling team, sometimes also the citizens ruled by him, to improve the internal situation. The patron state cannot lose face (to say nothing of strategic interests) and this is probably why it must make concessions.

Such was the framework of Soviet-Cuban relations. But however close the relations between the power elites of the two states of a dyad are, they are always complex. If conditions are favourable — in the case of Soviet clients an important role was played by geographical distance — the rulers of a client country could take bold risks, and this led to a specific interdependence of the two partners.

To leave a client in the lurch may be risky not only for the patron's prestige but quite concretely for his chance to win over new satellites. This means that even not very obedient satellites must be helped. It is not always possible to remove an inconvenient client (i.e. cP) and replace him by a more obedient one; a client's possible "disloyalty" must be taken into account, hence the margin of freedom accorded to him. I have used quotation marks for the word reflects the view of the patron<sup>23</sup>. *Raison d'état*, that is the interest of the ruling group in this type of relationship, makes it necessary for the client to look after his own interest,

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<sup>22</sup> The metropolis does not extend its support unconditionally. Emperor Bocassa did not get it, for he ignored the norms of Western decency and having attracted the attention of the world press, became inconvenient to his patrons.

<sup>23</sup> As S. Goncharov, J. W. Lewis, Xue Litai put it: "playing on the complicated relations between Stalin and Mao, Kim achieved his ends, a classic example of the weak manipulating the strong", *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War*, Palo Alto 1994.

and this may sometimes mean a change of patron. In the conditions of the cold war and coexistence of the two world powers, it was sometimes possible to choose between them. But even when no choice was possible, the extent of freedom was sometimes quite large.

The successive dictators of South Vietnam realized this even at the dramatic moment of invasion from the North. When the Kennedy administration was dissatisfied with the despotic rule of the Ngo family, aid was cut off, though not for long. This is how David Bell, head of A.I.D., American aid for South Vietnam, explained the situation to Kennedy's great surprise: "It is an automatic policy. We do it whenever we have differences with a client government"<sup>24</sup>. Irrespective of changes in presidency, this mechanism is still in operation, now even in a fully open way<sup>25</sup>.

Clientelist intricacies were particularly strong in relations between Washington and Saigon, relations between the Americans overlapping the relations between the two states. What posed a grave danger was that in defending their country against the North, the commanders of the A.R.V.N. (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) seemed to be thinking mainly of their own political

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<sup>24</sup> D. Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, New York (1st ed. 1969) 1973, p. 346. It is worth presenting the context as it has been described by this well-informed author: "... David Bell ... who was not regularly a high-level player, said rather casually that there was no point of cutting off commodity aid (for South Vietnam), he had already cut it off. 'You've done what?' said the startled President of the United States. 'Cut off commodity aid', Bell answered. 'Who the hell told you to do that?', asked the President, since this was no small action; it could easily bring down a government. 'No one', said Bell. 'It's an automatic policy. We do it whenever we have differences with a client government'. And so the President sat there shaking his head, looking at Bell and saying, 'My God, do you know what you've done?'. But some people thought that Bell had obtained the consent of someone in the State Department.

<sup>25</sup> The following is information from the "International Herald Tribune" of 22 November 2000: U.S. Cools to independent Montenegro, by John Lancaster, Washington Post Service: "On a visit last month to the Montenegrin capital, Podgorica, the top U.S. envoy to the Balkans, James O'Brien, made it clear to Mr. Djukanovic that continued delivery of U.S. aid to reach \$89 million this year depended on his willingness to avoid 'unilateral' steps to break away from Serbia, a senior official said". The two cases of the patron's interference in international relations cannot however be compared: with regard to Djukanovic the Americans are carrying out the United Nations' policy, there is no threat of a domino reaction, that is, of the recomunisation of the whole region, there is only the fear of a new stage of instability. The routine of political pressure has remained. However, the reasons of the quasi-patron are understandable. Why should the United States finance another state's policy if it thinks that this policy endangers political stability in the region?

game and were gathering armed followings for this purpose<sup>26</sup>. In their diaries the American officers who served as advisors to Vietnamese commanders of various levels expressed their dissatisfaction with, and even despair at, this situation<sup>27</sup>.

Denis J. Duncanson, a British observer of the war theatre in Vietnam, adds a more prosaic consideration to these observations. Each American advisor, from sergeant in a battalion to the high command and the highest civilian offices, operated in a specific dyad with a Vietnamese commander. It was the American advisors to A.R.V.N. officers that were responsible for the stream of valuable commodities, a large part of which found its way to the market. As Duncanson says, each such dyad was backed by the prospect of obtaining personal equipment, of gaining the possibility of an overseas journey and sometimes control over aid, from which the client could leave something for himself, thus gaining his own clients of a lower level<sup>28</sup>. Duncanson's account shows the extremely complex clan and political structures that reached all spheres in which the state and the army functioned. Each of Diem's three brothers had his own sphere of operation, including the Catholic Church (one of the brothers became a bishop)<sup>29</sup>. The fields of influence of the president and the Americans interlocked, not without collision, and Diem, alarmed by the growing influence of his American patrons, supported British observers for some time.

The rivalry between two communist powers, the USSR and China, in the Third World, even though it was different, can also be interpreted in clientelist categories. Enver Hoxha in Albania

<sup>26</sup> "... himself (i.e. General Minh), Tran van Don and Tran van Kim, all respected and none of them commanding troops because they had followings of their own, and were thus considered dangerous by Nhu...", D. Halberstam, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

<sup>27</sup> A British military observer has presented these matters in a very interesting way: D. J. Duncanson, *Government and Revolution in Vietnam*, London 1968; idem, *The Clientelist Regime of Ngo-Dinh-Diem Vietnam 1954-1963*, in: Ch. Clapham (ed.), *Private Patronage and Public Power. Political clientelism in the modern state*, New York 1982, pp. 93-113.

<sup>28</sup> "The method of operation was clientelist in its very conception", D. J. Duncanson, *Government*, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-108. In his article Duncanson lays greater stress on the sociology of political mechanisms in South Vietnam than in his book which was written on the spur of the moment and published in 1968.

<sup>29</sup> D. J. Duncanson, *Government*, *op. cit.*; idem, *The Clientelist*, *op. cit.* The Buddhist monks remained outside the patronage network for they did not have a centralized hierarchy.

changed patrons in perhaps the most spectacular way, but Kim Ir Sen, who was created and trained by the Soviet intelligence service, also knew how to take advantage of the conflict which was developing around and above him.

Fidel Castro's Cuba brings to the fore the question of the client's international or rather global tasks. The overthrow of Battista's dictatorship in Cuba was not a foregone conclusion, for at first Castro was not the Soviets' man. As is well known, Cuba's role in the cold war was determined by the attitude of the United States which had lost a satellite and which by its enmity to the new radical social regime on the island pushed Fidel into the arms of Nikita Khrushchev. The reaction of the American authorities is understandable and it would be too pedantic to analyze whether loyalty to the client of the cP type played any role in American policy. What is still a matter of a scholarly and political discussion is the balance sheet of the new structure. From the economic point of view the alliance turned out to be extremely costly for the patron, even though the European satellite countries were forced to participate in the aid extended to the regime in Cuba (in the opinion of leaders, political advantage often compensates the financial loss in such relations). Cuba, in turn, took part in various armed conflicts in the Third World, in Latin America and Africa, where direct intervention would have been inconvenient or even impossible for the Soviets, that is, in Angola and Ethiopia. Fidel Castro dared to take initiatives which would not have been tolerated from a less influential and less independent client. He acquired a solid political position and personal prestige on a world scale, drawing his strength from widespread anti-Americanism. It can be said that the Castro regime became the symbol of a small state's defiance of the Big Brother. He was helped by many myths which influence the imagination of various circles in the world: the myth of Che Guevara, a solitary guerilla fighter, the unfortunate invasion in the Bay of Pigs which discredited the U.S. government in the eyes of some people because of its ineptness and in the eyes of others as a glaring example of "Yankee imperialism".

The rivalry for clients in Latin America, which was quite sharp until recently, allows us to see the differences in the methods used by patrons from the two opposing systems. Only one of them, the United States, has rich non-military resources at its

disposal: public and private capital and a group of people interested in philanthropic activity. To use Charles Tilly's terminology, one could define the USSR as a typically coercion-intensive state and the USA as a capital-intensive one<sup>30</sup>. This does not mean that the United States does not use, or even avoids using, methods of coercion. But it must take world opinion into account, not only in the United Nations forum. The United States is capable and even willing to bind its clients by other means. In Latin America especially (the banana republics) the state apparatus and huge enterprises equipped with resources comparable to those possessed by the state with which they deal, operate parallelly but are linked together. The ideological, political and propaganda considerations cherished by Western societies tell them to support the development of democratic structures, but the problem is not quite clear because of the weakness of democracy and the lack of transparency in many unstable countries. It is easy to underestimate the changes which have taken place in the last fifty years, in particular the inquisitiveness of the press and the pressure of changeable public opinion. This was revealed by the case of Allende and Pinochet in Chile.

Different as their intentions may have been, the two superpowers — patrons on a world scale — the democratic and the communist one, backed client-dictators on a global scale and tried to ensure the stability of their regimes as long as they could be certain of the loyalty of the local group in power and of the general profitability of this kind of relationship. The alternative between dictatorship and democracy is rarer in the Third World than rivalry between two dictators. Liberal opinion not always has a choice. The fate of Ghana, Liberia, Congo, Nigeria and the Ivory Coast — to stick to this region — proves this beyond doubt.

The case of the Romanian communist dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu, shows that yet another variant is possible. A satellite of the Soviet Union, a state lying near the Big Brother and surrounded by rather unfriendly vassal states (with which it had ethnic conflicts and territorial disputes of long standing) dared to violate the duty of obedience to its patron. First, Romania under Ceaușescu manifested its independence: in the summer of 1968 it broke away from the collective spectacular condemnation,

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<sup>30</sup> C. Tilly, *Capital and European States, AD 990-1990*, Cambridge, Mass., 1990.

followed by suppression, of a disobedient client, People's Czechoslovakia. Secondly, instead of the cult of the patron, first the Soviet Union as a whole and later the person of L. I. Brezhnev, a cult which was binding on all Soviet satellites, Romania introduced an intensive cult of Ceaușescu ("the Genius of the Carpathians") and a constant mandatory admiration of his activity. This raised the leader's internal and especially international prestige, though the bombastic style of Ceaușescu's propaganda threw into the shade the imagination of foreign satirists (but let us not underestimate the cult of Kim Ir Sen in People's Korea). This brought some material support from the West which was interested in the rebellious Soviet client, but it can be assumed that the aid went into the hands of the ruling group and did not lead to economic growth or an improvement of the system.

We have said above that the model proposed by Galtung also takes international institutions into account. Let us put the matter on a larger scale: since there are now some 150 states in the world, the patron-client relations can now be much more complex than they were before because of strong economic, political and cultural links between them and because of the existence of corporations whose interests cover the territories of many states and even the entire globe. What is new is the presence of international institutions, usually dominated by the richest countries. The financial help they extend for charity or development is, as a rule, insufficiently controlled. This means that a large part goes straight into the hands of the rulers of these countries; according to Galtung's scheme, it enriches the power elite of the client state (cP).

But life, including international relations and world economy, is richer than the patron-client type of relations. Where in this structure would we place North Korea whose dictator is playing his game with Russia, America and China, a game which is much more complex than the one that was played by Kim Ir Sen?<sup>31</sup> The North Korean dictator and his team have a double stake: weapons of mass destruction (ballistic missiles, nuclear and biological weapons) which he may have, on the one side, and the hunger of his subjects (pP) on the other. In this situation the young Kim may become both useful and dangerous, which gives

<sup>31</sup> S. Goncharov, J. W. Lewis, Xue Litai, *op. cit.*

him great bargaining power. He is thought to be unreliable, which paradoxically, strengthens his power. In July 2000 he allowed President Putin to claim at the Okinawa meeting of great powers' leaders that he was successful in taming an unreliable partner (which made the Russian president more predictable in the eyes of his Western partners)<sup>32</sup>. Soon afterwards the Korean gave Mrs. Madeleine Albright the opportunity to achieve some success in talks, which she badly needed after a successive breakdown of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations at Camp David. It is a puzzle how the accounts between the cP and the pP will be settled in North Korea if these measures are continued, in other words, how the people outside the army and outside the *nomenklatura* will benefit by this. One can also conjecture about the type of relations that will emerge if the barbed wire is really removed from the 31st parallel.

The fate of the Berlin Wall has taken such questions out of political fiction.

*(Translated by Janina Dorosz)*

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<sup>32</sup> I wrote this text in July 2000.