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It's Us They're Shooting In Warsaw / Under the Polish Volcano (December, 1981)

Various Authors

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It's Us They're Shooting In Warsaw / Under the Polish Volcano
(December, 1981)

June, 1982

Printed and published in London, 6.2.82

Two texts on Poland, February, 1982

(Printed on two sides of a 17 by 22 inch poster.)

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— Rosa Luxemburg, *Social Reform or Revolution*

Printed and published in London, 6.2.82.

Don't wait for penury to devour stalinists-cum-thatcher-labour-
sdp rippers

critics, the United States has started to repay Polish debts at the American banks.

“The loans were guaranteed by the US Department of Agriculture to finance grain sales to Poland. Under the terms of the agreement, the US was required to declare Poland in default before fulfilling its guarantee.

“But after a stormy debate the National Security Council decided not to force a default for fear of spreading financial disruption throughout the West and creating fresh problems with its allies which carry the bulk of Poland’s “debt”, and in turn these allies trade extensively with the East: witness the recent gas agreement between Mitterand and Moscow. Calvo-Toxico from Spain is also following suit and West Germany’s economy depends a lot on its Eastern block trade. “The decision will be seen in some quarters as an American concession to martial law in Poland which contrasts with the tough rhetoric of President Reagan. (...) A State Department memorandum which was leaked to the New York Times, urged that the National Security Council should not take any action ‘which risks that Poland should be declared in default’. The commercial banks, which have already set aside money in their accounts for unguaranteed Polish debts, have also carefully avoided a default. They say that such a move could lead to an unseemly scramble for Polish assets around the world” (*The Guardian*, 2.2.81). As the crisis of the economy deepens throughout the world it is not by chance that we can read such articles in newspapers; the memory of the Wall Street crash of 1929 is still a nightmare for those who are in power. Their time is up; the Polish question has once more set this old world alight.

“Capitalism, as a result of its own inner contradictions, moves towards a point when it will be unbalanced, when it will simply become impossible...the growing anarchy of capitalist economy leads inevitably to its ruin.”

1. It’s Us They’re Shooting In Warsaw

“The U.S.A. was warned in time by the Russians about the coup d’etat in preparation in Poland, if the Bonn government is to be believed, well before Chancellor Schmidt’s trip to the D.D.R. This time the complicity of the superpowers has worked well.”

– *Der Spiegel* 21/12/81

“Reagan stated, to illustrate Moscow’s complicity in the repression, that the posters announcing martial law in Poland on December 13th, had been printed in the USSR from last October onwards.”

– *Liberation*, December 26, 1981

“Marchais was informed in advance of the Polish putsch...According to other sources, the French secret service, SDECE, is supposed to have been informed in advance, already three weeks ago, about the confrontation in Poland by a renegade from the Polish Central General Staff.”

– *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 18, 1981

“Of course we are not going to do anything.”

– Claude Cheysson, French Foreign Minister, about Poland. *Le Monde*, December 15, 1981

“Polish workers, you can all die.” This is what all the powers think. Of course we are going to do everything we can to make them shut up. These crocodiles will soon be shedding tears of blood.

Starting from a critique of their conditions of survival, expressing themselves in trade-unionist form, which was only necessarily put forward in order to be superseded (let’s proceed slowly, we’re in a hurry: “The memory of December ’70 is in every mind: we don’t want to get mown down by machine-guns. We want to win.” – *Le Monde*, 19/8/80), Polish workers came to criticize the whole

of the dominant conditions of life in Poland. After having vainly attempted to stem several outflankings, notably by the action of its intellectual “experts” who collided with the democracy of the debates, the apparatus of Solidarity, in calling for, under the impetus of the base, the creation and management of a Council for the National Economy, were only ratifying the movement that was bringing civil society to seize hold of all the spheres of social activity habitually confiscated by the State: the requisitioning then distribution of the goods produced, the emergence of parallel direct circuits between workers and peasants, the beginning of the determination of social needs simultaneously with direct seizure of the means of production. This tendency towards the abolition of the global surplus-value collected by the bureaucratic class coinciding with the paralysis of the State was to compel the latter into intervening just when it was going to lose all power and all finance. Polish workers understood this quite well, those who formed armed groups for self-defence and some who seized stocks of arms in the days preceding the putsch, at a time when their trade-union leaders were still cherishing politico-democratic illusions.

Thus the bureaucracy, after having played off Walesa and the ruling strata of Solidarity against the workers, ended up by engaging the liquidation of the trade-union in its entirety, that is to say on one hand the reformist management which had become useless to it, and on the other the 10 million of its grassroots members whose revolt it was really necessary to begin to crush by means of the sole force that still seemed to remain standing in this decomposed State: the army. Now even this army could no longer manage to re-establish order; precautions had however indeed been taken: having been prepared since the month of April with the installation of a parallel network of radio transmissions by the Russian military, then relayed in October by a deployment of the army on Polish territory which, under the cover of fighting against the clandestine stocking of commodities and the black market, was aimed in fact at drawing up the list of suspects, this stalinist pronunciamiento

A few days before in Washington, the Assistant Treasury Secretary, a certain Mark Leland said that “the potential is there for Poland to pay the full amount” (*Financial Times*, 29.1.82). This being newspeak for workers will repay the billions owed to the western bankers, by slaving their guts more and by paying more for the commodities they produce (food prices have quadrupled), and the memories of recent “food riots” are still fresh in the minds of millions of Polish people. Jaruzelski and his cronies are now sitting on a time bomb, and the same goes for their colleagues in Czechoslovakia!

Those in power in the West had to be seen to be “against” the recent putsch in Poland. They staged their Let Poland Be Show (notice how the oldest and most cunning ruling class in the world, i.e. the British establishment did not buy that programme): the BBC preferred to sponsor an absurdist programme (Not the Nine O’clock News) which featured a sketch on Poland. More confusion, that’s the name of the game. In the United States it is pure vulgarity, and this crap helps the bureaucrats from the Russian Empire who in turn launch a counter-show on Reagan and Co. All the have-beens from the spectacle were present in that Reagan show. What a crew! From poor O. Welles to Charlton Heston, the Westminster Ripper, i.e. Thatcherette, President Bonzo (Reagan), Schmidt (who in true grocer fashion gave the Deutschemark value of the parcels sent to Poland; next week he will publish the contents!), Henry Fonda read from the Communist Manifesto, Mitterand, also known as skateface in France, was there, and to crown it all, Frank “Mafia” Sinatra sang and put the nails on the coffin. It is really a macabre story, but all this is just a show: only idiots believe in it. The real story is to be found elsewhere.

Since the two economies, from the West and the East, are more and more dependent on each other, it is difficult for the capitalists of the West to impose grain embargoes for example on the Eastern bureaucrats. The following lines will prove all this: “In a move which is certain to anger the Reagan Administration conservative

Paris, December 1981

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2. Under The Polish Volcano

(...) “Contrast the outcry over Polish martial law with the atrocities presently being committed in (the West-aligned) Turkey, where military rule has resulted in an estimated 30,000 people detained without trial” (...) — E. P. Thompson, speaking in Committee Room no. 7 of the House of Commons, to mark the publication of his banned BBC lecture. False consciousness at its best! Labour Party moralism at its worst!

(...) “On the other hand, Solidarity did not assist the search for compromise by its calls for a national work stoppage and demonstrations this coming week, and its talk of holding a referendum about establishing a provisional government can only be regarded as provocative”. (...) — *Morning Star* (December 14, 1981). Stalinist lies as usual.

“Stalinist bureaucracy can only be vanquished by its own deficiencies and by the effects of internal revolts. In order to hit its sore points, revolutionary agitation will have to spread to the core of all the countries of the Knouto-Russian Empire.” — Polish bush telegraph (January, 1982).

The recent clashes near the Lenin shipyards (31.1.82), in Gdansk, accompanied by anti-State leaflets demonstrates once more that proletarians in Poland have not yet given up the fight against the bureaucratic vampires, and this despite the mass arrests (50,000 to 70,000 people have been interned) that took place immediately after the recent putsch.

where soviet officers and soldiers were staffing the Polish troops, did not manage to stem the formidable resistance movement that has taken hold of the whole country. And if certain factories have been stormed by tanks and airborne troops, it is at the same time the desertions, the mutinies and fraternisations with the workers that have multiplied since the beginning of the putsch, obliging power to imprison and shoot several hundreds of soldiers of an army of which two thirds are conscripts, before launching its special units of the militia.

It remains to be seen whether this clamp-down conducted according to the most tested methods of ordinary stalinism will enable them to restore an economy of such complete dilapidation: everyone knows that penury is a consequence and a condition of the functioning of totalitarian bureaucratic society, and that, in addition to the pillage that the USSR makes its Polish province undergo, the failure of any rationalisation of production and distribution is inscribed in the very nature of this system and makes it the eternal debtor of the Western bourgeoisies. This interdependence on the economic level corresponds with explicit connivance in the practice of power:

“Speaking only as a banker it would be a good thing if Russia invaded, because then she would be obliged to honour Poland’s debts.” — a London bank official, *The Sunday Times* 13/12/81

The putsch, a police operation conducted by the Russo-Polish bureaucrats and the militia, cut short drastically that which mere infiltrations into Solidarity had not been able to succeed in doing. Furthermore this is the plan set out by Andrzej Zabinski, leader of the Katowice section of PUWP and instructor of police officers and the security services, as reported by *Der Spiegel*, April 6th, 1981:

“The leaders of Solidarity must try the taste of power. Rooms must be placed everywhere at their disposal,

and furnished as luxuriously as possible. I have always said it, and I shall repeat it to this assembly: I don't know any men whom having power would not be corrupted, it is merely a question of time and degree (he laughs).

“With them, one can already see quite a few things going in that direction: easy access to money, travelling by taxi to Gdansk, telephones, contacts with the party secretary of the viovodeship, and the vice Prime Minister. They are beginning to travel and spend lavishly the money that...in short, it's the right management!

“How will it end up? Probably with an amalgamation of all these unions, but that could take years. The first goal is that they don't throw members of our party out of their unions. The second is that they throw out the people from KOR. Then, we should quite patiently peel off the rest.”

Simultaneously, the euphoric unconsciousness of the management of Solidarity, in refusing to understand that a situation of double power could only precede a confrontation, decoyed the movement towards illusory “free elections” whilst they had received alarming information issuing from the highest level: “(The dissident general, Dubicki) revealed that he had warned, since November 1980, those responsible in Solidarity about what was being hatched and that he had advised them to get ready to go into clandestinity. He continued to inform them later on about the preparation of the state of war, but, he concludes, ‘they minimized the whole problem. They knew and didn't act.’” — *Le Monde* 27/12/81

The alternative is posed from now on:

- Either the Polish workers, by actual deliberate sabotage of production (cf. call from No. 4 of the Solidarnosc bulletin), will lead passive resistance to a more advanced struggle

which will liquidate the dead weight of the past in the minds of the living, notably the emotional attachment to a leader and the lowest nationalist, religious and reformist dregs of the movement. It will be a matter, at the very least, of going over to a conscious dynamic of radicalisation and extension over the whole sphere to the east of the Polish situation. Such a development requires the taking over by the workers themselves of all the aspects of their struggle, which amounts to putting into action the principles of direct democracy put forward since the beginning of the movement.

- Falling short of these conditions, the Church will regain the place it was in the process of losing, and normalisation will prevail a little while longer with the three-part holy alliance that is being formed between the firing-squad party, the clerical stench and the collaborating tendency of the trade-union management opportunely purged by the putsch.

As for the sinister stalino-socialist French government, it did not wait for the example of its Polish acolytes to massacre the insurgents of Setif in 1945 with napalm, nor to send in 1947 its CRS against the miners, in the same way that it will greet the wildcat strikers its trade-unions have not managed to muzzle, with a hail of bullets.

Whatever the outcome, if the social movement which was abolishing the existing conditions in Poland was able to assume a trade-unionist aspect unceasingly contradicted by the contents of the struggles, a movement of a similar depth in the Western zone can only begin with the liquidation of all trade-unionism.

The miners of Wujek, by cutting off the hands and feet of the militiamen who had massacred their comrades, have shown that the fate of the defenders of bureaucracy has nothing to envy the one which we are reserving for our own bourgeois.

Long live the autonomous resistance of Polish proletarians!