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EAST EUROPEAN REACTIONS TO DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND

1. IN THIS NOTE WE EXAMINE EAST EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TO DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND OVER THE LAST MONTH OR SO, THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EFFECTS IN THESE COUNTRIES, AND THE MEASURES BEING TAKEN BY EAST EUROPEAN REGIMES TO COUNTER THOSE EFFECTS.

2. REACTIONS IN THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO POLISH EVENTS HAVE VARIED SUBSTANTIALLY ACCORDING TO THEIR PARTICULAR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. THE SHARPEST REACTION HAS COME FROM THE GDR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT ROMANIA, WHOSE REGIMES FEEL PARTICULARLY INSECURE. CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE GDR HAVE A PARTICULARLY CLOSE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH POLAND AND THEIR WORKERS ARE MOST OPEN TO INFLUENCE FROM POLISH DEVELOPMENTS BECAUSE OF SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND DISAPPOINTED EXPECTATIONS. THESE COUNTRIES ARE ALSO MOST VULNERABLE BECAUSE OF THEIR PROXIMITY TO POLAND AND ACCESS TO WESTERN MEDIA. ROMANIAN FEARS PROBABLY DERIVE FROM THE COUNTRY'S LOW LIVING STANDARDS AND HISTORY OF STRIKES.

3. ECONOMIC DISRUPTION IN POLAND HAS CAUSED PROBLEMS FOR ALL THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO A GREATER OR LESSER EXTENT. THEY ARE HAVING TO SUPPLY EXTRA FOODSTUFFS AND CONSUMER GOODS TO POLAND TO HELP ALLEVIATE CONSUMER UNREST THERE. THESE GOODS WOULD NORMALLY HAVE BEEN EITHER MARKETED AT HOME OR EXPORTED; EITHER WAY THIS MEANS A LOSS TO THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY, ESPECIALLY AS POLAND IS UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE TO PAY FOR THE GOODS IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND LEADS TO POPULAR RESENTMENT. SOVIET RAW MATERIALS ARE ALSO BEING DIVERTED TO POLAND, AND POLISH RAW MATERIALS SUCH AS COAL ARE NOT BEING DELIVERED TO OTHER EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN THE CONTRACTED QUANTITIES. FURTHER DISRUPTION IS CAUSED BY INTERRUPTIONS IN DELIVERIES OF COMPONENTS UNDER CO-OPERATION AND SPECIALISATION DEALS, AND DIFFICULTIES IN TRANSPORTATION - A GREAT DEAL OF INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT TRAFFIC USES POLISH ROADS AND RAILWAYS AND THE BALTIC PORTS. THESE LATTER PROBLEMS ARGUE FOR AN ATTEMPT TO SHORE UP AND

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STABILISE THE POLISH ECONOMY, SINCE ITS COLLAPSE (WITH OR WITHOUT SOVIET INTERVENTION) COULD ONLY MAKE THE SUPPLY PROBLEMS EVEN WORSE. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS MAY HOWEVER POINT IN A RATHER DIFFERENT DIRECTION AND VARY FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY.

GDR

4. HONECKER'S VISIT TO AUSTRIA IN MID-NOVEMBER BROUGHT ABOUT A LULL IN CRITICAL COMMENT IN THE GDR PRESS, BUT THE FLOW HAS NOW BEEN RESUMED, APPARENTLY UNAFFECTED BY A MEETING BETWEEN HONECKER AND POLISH PARTY SECRETARY OLSZOWSKI ON 20 NOVEMBER. THE SUPREME COURT DECISION ON SOLIDARNOSC WAS REPORTED BRIEFLY AND WITHOUT COMMENT. SINCE THEN THE CENTRAL TARGET OF GDR CRITICISM HAS SHIFTED FROM THE TRADE UNIONS AS A WHOLE TO DISSIDENT GROUPS, PARTICULARLY KOR, AND TO THE TRADE UNION LEADER LECH WALESZA. IN THESE ATTACKS THE GDR PRESS HAS MAINLY BEEN USING MATERIAL FROM THE POLISH PRESS. HOWEVER THE LATEST ARTICLES HAVE TAKEN A MORE ORIGINAL LINE IN ACCUSING WALESZA OF BEING ANTI-COMMUNIST AND HOSTILE TO DETENTE AND OF HAVING LINKS WITH AN ITALIAN NEO-FACIST GROUP.

5. THE GDR AUTHORITIES, NO DOUBT ACUTELY AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF THEIR OWN WORKERS ADOPTING THE STRIKE WEAPON OR WANTING MORE INDEPENDENT UNIONS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS, HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO REDUCE CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED IN OCTOBER MUST HAVE REDUCED PERSONAL CONTACTS CONSIDERABLY, AND THERE MAY BE A QUESTION MARK OVER THE AGREEMENT ON GUEST WORKERS WHICH EXPIRES AT THE END OF 1980. SOME REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF POLES LIVING IN THE GDR, INCLUDING STUDENTS, SEEMS QUITE LIKELY.

6. RESTRICTIONS ON POLISH/EAST GERMAN CONTACTS SEEM TO BE ONLY PART OF A WIDER MOVE TO ISOLATE EAST GERMANS FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD (THOUGH LITTLE CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT THEIR ACCESS TO THE WEST GERMAN MEDIA). THE CURRENCY EXCHANGE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON TRAVEL TO THE WEST IN OCTOBER HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED BY THE CURTAILMENT OF CULTURAL VISITS TO THE FRG FROM NEXT JANUARY, AND RESTRICTIONS ON CHURCH CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. WHILE THE CAUSES OF THE GENERAL DETERIORATION IN GDR/FRG RELATIONS GO BEYOND FEAR OF DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND, THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY A MAJOR CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR IN THE NERVOUSNESS CURRENTLY BEING SHOWN BY THE GDR LEADERSHIP.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

7. THE CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA HAVE CONTINUED TO TAKE PERHAPS THE HARSHTEST LINE IN EASTERN EUROPE OVER EVENTS IN POLAND. ARTICLES AND SPEECHES HAVE REFERRED TO QUOTE THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION STIRRED UP IN HUNGARY IN 1956, IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1968 AND NOW IN POLAND UNQUOTE, HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE WEST IS NOW

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MERELY USING SUBTLER METHODS TO ACHIEVE THE SAME GOALS, AND MAINTAINED THAT ANY DIVERGENCE FROM THE GENERAL LAWS OF SOCIALISM COULD ENDANGER THE ACHIEVEMENTS OR EVEN THE EVERY EXISTENCE OF SOCIALISM IN PARTICULAR COUNTRIES. THE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS REPORTED THE DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT ON SOLIDARNOSC IN A BRIEF AND INCONSPICUOUS REPORT AND WITHOUT COMMENT. SOLIDARNOSC HAS HOWEVER BEEN SHARPLY ATTACKED, AND THE CZECHOSLOVAK TRADE UNION DAILY HAS STATED THAT TRADE UNIONS QUOTE MUST BE A PART OF THE STATE STRUCTURE UNQUOTE.

8. RESTRICTIONS HAVE NOW BEEN PLACED ON TRAVEL BETWEEN POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA WHICH WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF REDUCING INDIVIDUAL VISITS TO A MAXIMUM OF THREE PER YEAR. THE ONLY OTHER MEASURES WE KNOW OF TAKEN IN RELATION TO POLISH EVENTS ARE A TIGHTENING OF CONTROL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, WHICH HAS CLOSE LINKS WITH THE CHURCH IN POLAND.

HUNGARY

9. HUNGARY HAS TAKEN THE LEAST CRITICAL ATTITUDE TO POLAND AMONG EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND HUNGARIAN PRESS COMMENT ON POLAND HAS BEEN MODERATE IN TONE. HOWEVER, THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER THE KADAR/HUSAK MEETING ON 12 NOVEMBER TOOK THE HUNGARIAN POSITION SOMEWHAT CLOSER TO THAT OF THE HARD-LINERS, PROBABLY AS A RESULT OF PRESSURES FROM THE OTHER WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. THE COMMUNIQUE INCLUDED EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE POLISH PARTY IN REPELLING THE ACTIONS OF ANTI-SOCIALIST FORCES AND IN RESISTING WESTERN INTERFERENCE IN POLAND'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

10. DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND SEEM TO HAVE CONVINCED THE HUNGARIAN REGIME OF THE GENERAL CORRECTNESS OF ITS POLICIES. POLISH EVENTS SEEM HOWEVER TO HAVE BROUGHT HOME TO IT THE NEED TO REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE AND THEIR NEEDS, AND THAT THE TRADE UNIONS SHOULD ACT MORE INDEPENDENTLY AND BE SEEN TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF THEIR MEMBERS. SOME MODEST REFORMS OF THE TRADE UNIONS HAVE BEEN PUT IN HAND IN AN EFFORT TO PRE-EMPT WORKER DISSATISFACTION. SOME PROPONENTS OF THE ECONOMIC REFORMS IN HUNGARY ARE AFRAID THAT THE EXTRA PROBLEMS CAUSED BY DISRUPTION IN POLAND WILL PUT CURRENT ECONOMIC POLICIES AT RISK AND THAT HARD-LINERS IN THE PARTY WILL USE THIS TO ATTACK HUNGARY'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY.

ROMANIA

11. ROMANIA HAS CONTINUED TO TAKE THE LINE IN PUBLIC THAT POLISH DEVELOPMENTS ARE AN INTERNAL MATTER AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. CEAUSESCU HAS HOWEVER BEEN EXTREMELY CRITICAL PUBLICLY OF THE POLISH LEADERS' HANDLING OF THE CRISIS AND STATED THAT FREE TRADE UNIONS COULD ONLY SERVE BOURGEOIS INTERESTS. IN PRIVATE HE HAS ALSO SAID THAT IF THE

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POLES WERE INCAPABLE OF PUTTING THEIR HOUSE IN ORDER THEY COULD HARDLY COMPLAIN IF OTHERS HAD TO DO IT FOR THEM.

~~HIS ATTITUDE TO POSSIBLE SOVIET INTERVENTION IS~~
PROBABLY AMBIVALENT; HE WOULD LIKE TO STOP THE ROT IN POLAND, BUT PROBABLY FEARS THAT SOVIET ACTION WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY MOVES TO LIMIT EVEN FURTHER THE OTHER ALLIES' FREEDOM OF MANOEUVRE. THE ROMANIAN UNIONS, PREPARING FOR THEIR FORTHCOMING CONGRESS, HAVE LAID STRESS ON THEIR DUTY TO IMPROVE CONSUMER SUPPLIES AND PROMOTE WORKERS' WELFARE, WHILE REAFFIRMING THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY. WE BELIEVE THAT CEAUCESCU WILL RELY MAINLY ON REPRESSIVE POLICIES TO FORESTALL ANY WORKERS' UNREST IN ROMANIA.

BULGARIA

12. BULGARIAN COMMENT OF POLISH AFFAIRS HAS BEEN THIN AND CONSISTED MAINLY OF REPRINTS FROM POLISH SOURCES. IT HAS DWELLED ON WESTERN SUBVERSION IN POLAND, BUT WITHOUT ANY PARTICULARLY BULGARIAN ANGLE. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON REACTIONS WITHIN BULGARIA BUT THE BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE TAKEN ANY SPECIAL MEASURES TO COMBAT INFECTION.

CONCLUSIONS

13. CZECHOSLOVAK AND GDR COMMENT HAS CONTINUED TO BE HARSHER THAN THAT OF MOSCOW AND HAS DEVELOPED SOME SINISTER THEMES - REFERENCES TO QUOTE COUNTER-REVOLUTION UNQUOTE, PARALLELS BETWEEN POLAND NOW AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1968, AND THE SUGGESTION THAT A SOCIALIST COUNTRY COULD BE IN DANGER. WE BELIEVE THAT BY TAKING THIS LINE THE CZECHOSLOVAKS AND EAST GERMANS ARE TRYING TO DISCOURAGE ANY THOUGHTS OF EMULATING POLISH ACTIONS AMONG THEIR OWN PEOPLE, TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE POLISH LEADERSHIP TO ADOPT A TOUGHER STANCE TOWARDS THE FREE TRADE UNIONS AND PERHAPS TO IMPRESS ON THE RUSSIANS THE NEED TO TAKE A HARD LINE. MOSCOW MUST BE ACQUIESCING IN THE EXPRESSION OF SUCH VIEWS, WHICH IT NO DOUBT SEES AS HAVING A USEFUL EFFECT ON THE POLISH SITUATION.

IF THE SOVIET LEADERS BELIEVED DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND WERE SERIOUSLY UNDERMINING STABILITY AND PARTY CONTROL IN OTHER EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THIS WOULD WEIGH

HEAVILY WITH THEM IN FAVOUR OF MILITARY INTERVENTION IN POLAND.

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