

THE POLITICAL-PHILOSOPHIC LETTERS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

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ANDROPOV'S ASCENDANCY REFLECTS FINAL STAGE OF STATE-CAPITALISM'S DEGENERACY

The death of Brezhnev, which the mass media and the so-called scholar-specialists on Russia are writing up as if it were a turning point in history — "the end of an era" and the "beginning of a new age" — has nothing new about it. Far from signifying anything historically new, Andropov's ascendancy reflects the final stage of state-capitalism's degeneracy. Never before has a man who has spent 15 years of his life heading the most hated of secret police, the KGB, become the ruler of Russia, though that country had, under the totalitarian Stalin, been transformed from the first workers' state into its opposite — a state-capitalist society calling itself "Communist".

When the head of that secret police at the time of Stalin's death — Beria — thought he could achieve such a feat because he had dossiers not only on dissidents but on each Politburo member, Khrushchev knew how to put to his own use the hatred of the masses for this executioner, by having Beria executed, instead. The one thing that has never changed — until now — is the fact that the Party has always remained the "vanguard," the monolithic institution which gave orders to all other institutions, including the Army and especially the secret police.

Nothing is more illusory in the current analyses than the indulgence of the American "spets" on how technologically backward Russia is supposed to be, how un knowledgeable of computers and electronics, and how "on its last legs" is the Russian economy — as if the global recession resides only in Russia and not in the U.S. Nothing better gilds the equally reactionary Reagan Administration. Russia is no "basket case." Have the "Western" ideologists forgotten that it was Russia, not the U.S., which sent up the first Sputnik? Russia has by now extended itself not only to outer space but right on this earth, from Africa, Latin America and the Mediterranean to the Gulf region and most of the oceans of the world.

It is precisely Russia's "high technology" — when directed, as it has been, to militarization — which is the ground Reagan is rushing "to catch up with" in the hope of surpassing it, if only he, too, can achieve the destruction of unionization and high wages. And in the kind of technology represented by micro chips and robotics, among other things, isn't it Japan which has outdistanced the "West," be it in autos or steel or whatever?

'UNEMPLOYMENT WITHIN FACTORY GATES' AND MARTIAL LAW

No, it is not in "high technology" that one can find the great contradictions wrecking capitalism, private as well as state. One needs, instead, to dig deep into the basic

capital/labor relationship. Though the Russians, too, don't know how to overcome it, they do have a name for the current "low productivity" of Russian labor: "unemployment within the factory gates." Jaruzelski's answer is to militarize labor — which gives us a clue to Andropov, to whom we'll turn later.

Here, however, all eyes must return to the period from August, 1980 through December, 1981, when state-capitalism confronted an impossible contradictory duality. On the one side, the Polish workers created Solidarity, that elemental new form of a genuinely independent trade union movement, within the Russian orbit, which raised political demands of such an indivisible nature, as Freedom. On the other side, the totalitarian State turned to the Army when they saw that Solidarity had inspired even some in the Communist Party to solidarize with it. The shock to the rulers, in Poland as in Russia (who recognized in Solidarity a veritable "dual government"), was so overwhelming that they decided the Communist Party, too, must be put in its place. The decision was made to launch martial law on Dec. 13.

Do Western ideologists need to see the actual Minutes of the last meeting the Russian "eminence grise," Suslov, had with the Polish rulers he still could trust, in order to understand what has happened in the new stage of state-capitalism? Wasn't that made clear enough once General Jaruzelski was elevated to be the leader also over the Party? The subordination of the Party to the Army and the ZOMOS has proved to be an actual anticipation of what would happen in Russia. But, because that is hardly the focus of the Western ideologists, the current events in Russia have diverted them, instead, to talking of Andropov's "culture."

The truth is that Andropov's coming to power, far from revealing a new era of "culture," reveals the state of degeneracy of state-capitalism as a whole. It was anticipated at its weakest point — in a satellite where the masses were in revolt and therefore the military had to be given power almost on a par with Big Brother himself. What needs to be seen is the pivot is not the degeneracy at the top, but the truth that the revolts against Communist totalitarianism for fully three decades have been so deep that the rulers have had to resort to the military over the heretofore sacrosanct Party machine.

THE CONTINUOUS REVOLT

Consider what Russia had to do, itself, to put down the East German revolt of June 17, 1953, the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, the Czechoslovak Spring in 1968 — whereas, in Poland, 1981, it was a native Pole, General Jaruzelski, who did it by himself. Any nuance of difference between the State and Production and the Military is gone. Marx is the only one who was right about the ultimate in capitalism — state-capitalism: there is nothing between the hierarchy in the factory at the point of production, and the State. As Marx put it, the State is the "exercise" of capital's domination.

Even under martial law the workers in Poland have continued their revolt. When Jaruzelski "abolished" Sol-

Idarity on Oct. 8, the shipyard workers in Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot refused to wait for a General Strike called for Nov. 10 and struck immediately. And when the government militarized the shipyards, drafting all those workers, men and women in Wroclaw and Nowa Huta walked out of their mills and plants. Yet, instead of reporting the thousands who did come out again on Nov. 10, the Western media reported these tremendous demonstrations a "failure" and the General Strike a "fizzle" — as if anyone could actually execute a general strike under martial law.

The greatness, newness and continuity of the Polish revolt lies deep in the creative recesses of spontaneous mass uprisings. For the first time ever in the three-decade-long revolt in East Europe, the workers had found a way, paved for them by a small, unique combination of workers and intellectuals known as KOR, who had developed the concept of a totally independent trade union movement far out of the confines of trade unionism in any other country in the East or in the West. When Solidarity became an actuality, the union did not leave matters only at the production line but demanded political freedoms as well. Indeed, it was because Solidarity had reached the stage of challenging state authority and winning legal status that the Communist ideologues, in Russia and at the top echelons of the military in Poland, feared they were confronting a veritable "dual government."

When the martial law, the imprisonments, and the hated ZOMOS still could not succeed in crushing the revolt, they added their version of "Roman circus." To encourage the Church's continued undermining of what the Underground Resistance was working for (and the masses were, indeed, undertaking actions independent of the Church advice), the State granted the Church a promise for a June visit by the Pope. Walensa's freedom was conditional on his "prudence" — a prudence that they (Jaruzelski, the Army, the ZOMOS, and Russia) will judge.

The question that must now be asked is what about the true independents, the politicians who weren't separating freedom from workers' control of production, the initiators of that unique worker-intellectual combination that laid the ground for Solidarity — KOR? What about those who are now risking their lives in continuing underground activity? What about Kuron, Modzelewski, Michalski, Litynski, Lipaki, Wujec, Fraszynski? Are the rulers preparing their execution to batonize the Roman Circuses? The last word has by no means yet been said!

STATE-CAPITALISM AND THE 'HUNGARY ROAD'

Not even that possibility has stopped the Western ideologues from their empty speculations about the Andropov phenomenon in Russia. Added to descriptions of Andropov's "culture" and "shrewdness" is speculation, not about the Hungarian Revolution, but about what they call the "Hungary road" — freer trade and some private property. We are now reminded that Andropov, who was Russian Ambassador to Hungary when Russia brought in its tanks to crush the revolution, had chosen Kadar as "his man" — and, since Kadar opposed the Russian overlordship when revolution first broke out, we are supposed to think of him as a socialist when he came to preside over the counter-revolution, especially since it then evolved as a "new Hungary road."

What is this "Hungary road"? Does allowing some "free trade" and relaxation of collectivization of agriculture change the class nature of the State? Does any of this make Andropov a veritable "closet liberal"? Total nonsense. Worse than that, such analysis discloses how

* An important letter, "The Danger in Poland," by George Konrad, has brought out the historic fact that in the Hungarian Revolution the leaders had also been promised that there would be no executions once "order is restored." But in fact Nagy and his colleagues were executed. (See New York Review of Books, Dec. 2, 1982, p. 6.)

totally ignored is the whole phenomenon of what has happened to the world economy ever since the Depression caused the total collapse of private capitalism. The truth is that the only way capitalism could save itself, and then launch into World War II, was to bow to the State Plan. It isn't Plan, Plan, Plan, but State, State, State that marked the new, the ultimate stage of capitalism. By whatever name it went — whether Roosevelt's "New Deal," or Japan's "co-prosperity sphere," or, after World War II, DeGaulle's constitutional authoritarianism — state intervention was here to stay. It achieved total control in its Russian form — Stalinism — only because it was easier to do it there since the revolution had destroyed Tsarism.

In Russia, though Stalin called it "socialism," what the world witnessed in fact was a transformation into opposite — of a workers' state into a state-capitalist monstrosity. Old capitalism, in the West and in the East, had what its ideologues call "a mixed economy," while aiding Stalin by gilding Russian state-capitalism as "socialism." The language could not possibly change the facts: Plan from above, State Plan, with its destruction of the workers' attempts to control production, spells out the State as sole decision-maker. This is what Marx called "barracks discipline" — and he was applying the expression not just to the Army but to the relations of capital and labor at the point of production in the factory. Which is why the State remains the excrecence of that exploitative relationship. In the nuclear age, it has reached its ultimate as both Goliaths, Russia and the U.S., are preparing for the Apocalypse with the Grand Illusion that nuclear war is "winnable" and that only the "Other" will suffer total annihilation.

FINALLY, ANDROPOV — AND THE RUSSIA-CHINESE FEELERS

Lest the phenomenal haste with which Andropov assumed full power before ever Brezhnev was buried gives us the impression of a well-oiled machine that never runs astray and of an unchecked rapid road to power, it is necessary to look carefully and objectively at Andropov's long road to becoming General Secretary of the Russian Communist Party in the 30-year period which was never free of the impossible dualities of exploitation, racism, sexism and brutal repression, on the one hand, and never ending revolts in Russia's Empire in East Europe, on the other.

As a young man, at the head of the Young Communist League, Andropov was sent to aid in the amputation of Finland during World War II. Thus, at the very beginning of his high-flying career, the simultaneous task of repression and giving the appearance of maintaining independence was first witnessed in Finland. In 1951 he was brought to Moscow. No sooner had the very first workers' revolt from under Communist totalitarianism erupted and been crushed in East Germany in 1953, than Andropov was sent to Hungary in 1954. He was to crush the revolution there in 1956, and supervised the rise of Kadar.

Whatever it was that Andropov learned from Khrushchev's rise and fall after putting missiles in Cuba at a time when Russia's nuclear might could not match the U.S. Goliath's, it was Khrushchev's "reforms" — so inseparable from state-capitalism's savagery — that molded Andropov's "new" regime as he came to head the KGB in 1967. He "liberalized" Stalin's treatment of the intellectuals by sending them to the new horrors called psychiatric hospitals.

The following year Brezhnev dared to call the counter-revolutionary assault on Czechoslovakia by Russian tanks — "internationalism." The infamous "Brezhnev Doctrine" is actually Russian chauvinistic imperialistic intervention into all "socialist countries." Stalin's "socialism in one country" has gone abroad to roost. In the half century since Stalin's usurpation of power developed into state-capitalism and reached a climax in the "Great Russian Patriotic War," what the world has witnessed is what Lenin sensed on his dying bed as he warned against Stalin. Lenin correctly spelled out Stalin's relations with fellow Communists in Georgia as: "Scratch a Communist and you find a Great Russian chauvinist." This rising

tide of nationalism-chauvinism is now armed with nuclear power, as is the U.S., and both nuclear Titans are driving toward a single country's total global power.

It is in this context, and not in the 50-minute long talk between Gromyko and Huang, that one needs to see whether there is anything new in Chinese Russian relations since Andropov's ascendancy to power. The relations between so-called "socialist countries" were starkly revealed in their true nationalistic context in the mid-1960s, when the turbulence was world-wide and the Nixon Administration, in its sphere, carried out the height of the counter-revolution against Vietnam abroad and against the anti-war Youth, the Black Revolution and Women's Liberation at home.

It was then that Andropov came to head the KGB and was followed by the "Brezhnev Doctrine." The Sino-Soviet orbit which split at the beginning of the 1960s, from an "unbreakable friendship" to a great conflict, reached its climax in Mao's "Cultural Revolution" when China subordinated Vietnam's life-and-death struggle with American imperialism to declare Russia as "Enemy No. 1." Deng's post-Mao China has not only continued that line but intensified it. Just as Mao sacrificed his "closest-comrade-in-arms," Lin Biao, when he dared to object to Mao's rolling out the carpet for Nixon, so Deng was concretizing Russia as "Enemy No. 1" by saying Russia was the worst of the imperialistic super-powers, and flirting with outright collaboration with U.S. imperialism against Russia.

But, just as U.S. imperialism never gave up its "national interests" in the preservation of the Chiang Kai-shek connection and protection of Taiwan even after the U.S. "alliance" with Deng, so Deng never gave up its stake in Russia — not when U.S. imperialism seems to disregard China's "national interests." Anyone, however, who seriously thinks that Andropov's putting out feelers to China means Russia's forgetting China's defection needs to take a deeper look at the capitalistic interests of each of these "socialist countries."

Just when we were confronted with a pre-revolutionary situation in Iran and the mass movement against the Shah was gaining a momentum of its own, both Russia and China, for their own national interests, were still embracing the Shah! Ever since the Hitler-Stalin Pact gave the green light to World War II, neither Stalin's Russia nor Mao's China (even when it was only in Yenan and pursued by Chiang Kai-shek's Army) has ever fundamentally departed from its inherent Stalinism, that is to say, its state-capitalist nature.

The overriding question for capitalist-imperialism the world over is how to force labor to produce and produce and produce for "production's sake" — that is, how to

enforce "labor discipline." For Russia, which has already tried "barrack discipline" in the factory as in the military — and still faces the continuous labor revolts in its East Europe, the question is: what else is left to try? It is here we need to have one more look at Andropov.

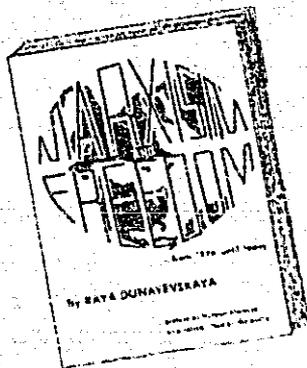
The "newness" of the present stage of state-capitalism, its full degeneracy, lies, not in its foreign relations, but strictly in the internal conflict, and that does include Russia's East Europe Empire. Let's return to Suslov's last visit to Poland on the eve of Dec. 13 (and, as it turned out, the eve of his death). — this time not to see what it signified for Poland, but for Russian succession. Suslov was Russia's preeminent ideologist, recognized as "the dogmatist" but at least somewhat apart from a direct economic-political-military identity, especially its secret police demands. Andropov, the KGB man, nevertheless moved rapidly to take over that portfolio after Suslov's death. That was the beginning of the year 1982.

As the conflict between Russia and the U.S. is heating up with Reagan's revival of the Cold War, and Russia is no longer that lesser nuclear might of the 1952 Cuban Missile crisis when Khrushchev had to bow to Kennedy, there seems to be no area which Andropov seems willing to leave out of his totalitarian hold. By taking over also all ideology, state-capitalism has "coordinated" political and military and ideology. And let's not forget that Weinberger has met his match in Russia's Defense Minister as Ustinov was the first to vote for Andropov, and declared that anyone calling for military cuts was committing an "unpardonable mistake."

Andropov has summed it all up himself in his first major speech to the Supreme Soviet — not when he talked the same language as Reagan against "the other," but when he talked of the crisis within Russian economy. It is clear that the 1975-76 economic global crisis has not abated in 1982. The tough words are directed against Russia's 30 million work-force for its lack of "labor discipline," its "shoddy work, inactivity and irresponsibility." Then comes still another warning against insufficient "labor productivity" which, says the new ruler and ideologist, should result in "an immediate and unavoidable effect on earnings."

Yes, the Russians have a word for it: "unemployment within factory gates." No, the Russians do not have the answer to the continuous resistance to "labor discipline" and the endless revolts. Here, too, Marx had the answer: The deeper the economic crisis the more does capitalism create its own "grave-diggers": the proletariat. In Russia, as in Poland, the gravediggers of capitalism are preparing. No, the last word has not yet been said, and Andropov's ascendancy will not stifle the massive opposition from all over its empire, beginning at home. Detroit, Mich.

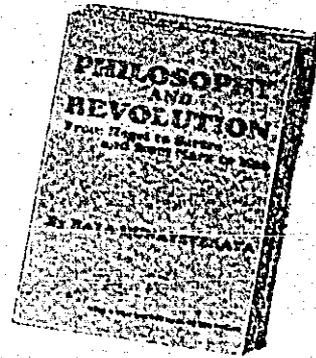
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