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## EAST EUROPE

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### ECONOMIC "SUBVERSION": A POLISH CASE STUDY

Summary: A book about "subversion" in the economy, recently published in Poland, has received considerable attention there, and was also noted by the Western press. This is the first time that somebody has tried to classify signs of this kind of "subversion" in a propaganda publication of any of the socialist countries. However, this first attempt has not proven successful and an article has even appeared in the Polish press which scoffs at the methods as well as at the level of this "antisubversion" exposition. The authors of the book, in their overzealous fervor, describe as a sign of subversion practically every view of the economy which differs from the Communist standpoint. According to them, every example cited which negates "the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist" is, in itself, a sign of subversion.

The publication of this book has provided an excuse for displaying the continuing postfactual differences in political views and connections. Moreover, it has proved once again that the extremist elements, although put on the defensive, are comparatively well organized and, in any case, sticking together. This book will probably be used as a textbook for the Party's lower-grade activists.

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Half way through the current year, there has appeared in the bookshops of Poland a new propaganda publication (1) devoted to counteracting "ideological subversion." It is a book written by Henryk Florek and Stanislaw Szeffler, entitled Subversion in the Economy. (2) As in the case of earlier publications of this type, Subversion in the Economy was received in lively fashion by the press, but the tenor of the opinions expressed in the numerous reviews and discussions varied widely, from boundless admiration, as in Pravo i Zycie, Zolnierz Wolnosci and the entire Pax press, to a scoffing tone, as in Polityka. It became obvious, therefore, that the publication of this book would serve as an excuse for another contention for power between the existing leftist elements and those circles within the Party which propagate a more pragmatic way of thinking. This alone calls for a closer look at this book, as well as at the reaction which it provoked.

#### New Wave of Anti-Americanism

This joint work by Florek and Szeffler also attracts attention for another reason: it represents a characteristic example of the new wave of anti-Americanism. It is an anti-Americanism of a special type, which differs from that style of criticizing specific problems or phenomena which prevailed recently. This latter was a type of criticism in the context of comparatively amply presented facts (as in the articles of M.F. Rakowski and Wieslaw Gornicki). This new anti-Americanism is treated by the authors as an indispensable part of the Weltanschauung, with no effort made to justify their argument. Their non-chalant pseudoscientific argumentation is characteristic of the kind of people who, when unable to find facts to support their theories, simply change the facts to suit their end. There is no trace of obsessive passion or hatred, as in the above-mentioned Gorecki articles. On the contrary, what is used here is the technique of compiling facts in insinuating fashion, with cold, thought-out and carefully tailored falsification, a willful slanting of facts according to a preconceived propaganda goal.

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(1) Of the well-known earlier publications of this type, it is worth mentioning the books by Janusz Kolczynski, and a pamphlet written by Janusz Skwara entitled Western Films and Politics.

(2) Published by the State Publishing House for Scholarly Works (a 5,000-copy edition; 176 pages).

Subversion in the Economy can be divided into three more or less equal parts. The first part discusses "the theoretical foundations of subversion," the second part presents the links between "revisionism in the Polish economy and subversive centers abroad," while the third discusses the crux of the matter, that is, "economic subversion itself and the factors which foster it."

"The Theoretical Foundations of Subversion"

The first and longest part of the book also serves as an introduction to the subject. This introductory part is intended to convince the reader that all theories or programs concerning political economy arising in the West are always mainly designed to wreck the socialist economic system, poisoning it with mistrust in its own possibilities or implanting defeatist theories in it. In this book, the names of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, Louis François Armand, Michel Drancourt, Daniel W. Bell, Raymond Aron, Franz-Josef Strauss, John Kenneth Galbraith, W.W. Rostow, and Zbigniew Brzezinski are mentioned in one breath, with hardly any shade of difference among them. Treating the works of the above-mentioned writers as the theoretical basis of "subversion in the economy," the authors of this book are less interested in whether the concept criticized by them is a product of criticism of the political and economic relations existing in the West, or a result of an investigation of relations in the socialist bloc. An example of this attitude is the particularly profuse quoting of the pronouncements of J.K. Galbraith, (3) with the insinuation that he is the leading figure in the "political subversion" group. The

- (3) In this book, Galbraith is mentioned 23 times, with quotations. Even in the Polish political atmosphere, such treatment accorded Galbraith aroused surprised comment, as can be seen, for example, in an excerpt from an article by Stefan and Andrzej Bratkowski published in the 17 May 1970 Kultura and entitled "Why Are We Continuing Our Economic Efforts?" In it they write, referring no doubt to the insinuations of Florek and Szeffler, "The forecasts of Galbraith ... contrary to the views of some of our hotheaded writers, cannot be considered as the theoretical economic foundation for the theory of a 'gradual convergence of socialism and capitalism.' ... In any case, it would be far more interesting to argue with Galbraith himself, in order to convince him, on the strength of facts, that the quoted fears concerning our camp are inopportune, rather than show him up as ... the ideologist who specializes in softening up Communism (sic!)."

major portion of this section of the book is devoted to discussing the convergence theory and, personally, to Zbigniew Brzezinski.(4) Here the authors betray considerable excitement, which indicates that this is the main thrust of their attack. But one can see the glaring disparity between the authors' intentions and their abilities as writers. As a result of this, the political portrait of Brzezinski drawn by Florek and Szeffler comes out somewhat sharper than the others, but the authors do not go beyond such descriptions as: "He threatens us with military power," "he turns out to be a poor dialectician," "he is a specialist in ideological subversion," "the most ardent anti-Communist," etc.(5)

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- (4) In this book, of 176 pages, there are 45 references to Zbigniew Brzezinski, some of them with quotations. One could almost say that this makes the book especially attractive, because it popularizes Brzezinski's views on no trifling scale (the references altogether take up about eight pages). But some of the quotations have been manipulated in such way that the author's thoughts emerge in a distorted form.
- (5) The above-mentioned Bratkowski brothers propose a more perfidious differentiation. Their tactics consist of removing "the anathema" from Galbraith, Rostow and several others, and directing all their venom instead to Brzezinski. They write, for instance, "Brzezinski's career in the USA could serve as a classical example of how much a one-eyed man can accomplish in a country of the blind. His sole credential as a Sovietologist is the fact that he was once a Pole: all that has remained from his former nationality is his Old-Polish self-assurance, which undoubtedly prevented him from learning the pragmatic 'American' way of thinking. It is silly to regard him as a partner in discussion, because, by the very nature of things, it is difficult to hold a discussion with a doctrinaire. For the sake of our own interests, it would be a good idea to dispatch to the Americans a few more 'advisers' of his sort, so-called specialists in 'Sovietology,' instead of publicizing Mr. Brzezinski in the Polish press as the chief adversary of our country, our nation, and our political system." This last sentence gives the impression of a polemic with the theories contained in the first part of Subversion in the Economy.



Any kind of political subtleties, or even tactical nuances, are quite alien to these authors. To avoid any doubt, they end this "theoretical" introductory part with a crude summing up, typical of the general level of the whole book:

Some of the above-mentioned bourgeois theories constitute the basis for the ideological, political and economic subversion against the Communist ideology as well as against the socialist countries.

### The Nature of Subversion

Meanwhile, the fact that this supposed "economic subversion" is none too clear to the authors themselves emerges in the second part of their book, a considerable portion of which they devote to outlining the background to this subversion, but still make no mention of it itself. Thus, of the 176 pages of the book, 118 pages are devoted to "an introduction to the subject." This "background" includes the following argument about revisionism:

The difficulty of the struggle against revisionism lies in the fact that it often can quietly develop for a considerable time in "hiding," concealed by research or a seeking for new, creative solutions. Only when they feel sufficiently strong do the revisionists start questioning the leading role of the working class, attack the Party and its ideology, strike at the foundations of the socialist system. Only then, therefore, can the working class and its Party resolutely fight revisionism and its supporters. The difficulty of fighting revisionism lies in the fact that, in the early stages, it is hard to distinguish its symptoms and to determine who belongs among its followers.

It is evidently still difficult for the authors to distinguish these symptoms, because, according to them, revisionistic activity in economic science runs in the following directions:

1. Open or camouflaged statements about "de-ideologizing" political economy and discarding Marxist methodology from political economy.
2. Attacking the leading role of the Party and the state in economic policy, particularly evident in the attack on

central planning. Voicing the view that the ideal mechanism by which the economy should function is solely the market mechanism.

3. Negation of the socialist character of state ownership.

4. Denial of the supremacy of the socialist economy over the capitalist.

In substance, this whole attempt to define revisionism is nothing more than a clumsy lie. In any case, not a single Polish economist has ever stated publicly that only "the market mechanism" should regulate the economy, and none has publicly questioned the potential supremacy of the "socialist economy." (6)

#### Who Are the "Revisionists?"

When coming at last to discuss the activity of each individual "revisionist," the authors introduce a singular sort of classification. They divide the "revisionists" into two groups: the first, into which they put those "who never took a truly Marxist stand" (for instance, Jan Drewnowski, Michal Kalecki), and the second group, which is composed of the people "whose entire study of political economy has been since the foundation of People's Poland" (for example, Wlodzimierz Brus, Ignacy Sachs, Kazimierz Laski). Of course "the defection" of those in the second group irritates the authors far more.

The classification of certain "revisionists," however, obviously caused them considerable difficulty. For instance, in the case of Stefan Kurowski, the authors wrote as follows:

It is difficult to place Kurowski either in the first or in the second group, because he never was a Marxist economist. Neither can one classify him as a bourgeois

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(6) This subject has already been discussed in the following works: Antoni Marek, "Revisionism in the Economy or the Economy of Revisionism," Polish Background Report/23, Radio Free Europe Research, 6 August 1968; and Antoni Marek, "Problems Confronting the Economy Since the Fifth PZWP Congress," Polish BR/2, RPER, 12 February 1969.

economist.... It would also be difficult to classify his writing as revisionism.

The authors could not solve this difficult dilemma of classification with a clear conscience. With marked regret that they have had to allow for a certain unclarity of classification, they list Kurowski in the subversive group, although with the somewhat lesser label of "an anachronistic economist," in other words, a petit bourgeois. (7)

The technique of proving schisms is rather peculiar: as a rule, excerpts from certain works of the early Sixties are quoted while in many cases these excerpts stem from the periods immediately preceding and following the Polish October, that is, the years between 1955 and 1957. This is a technique identical with that used in the provocative campaign against the economists in 1968, after the March events. (8)

Further along in this section of the book, the authors, unable to drag out the introduction any longer, get down to the actual subject of "subversion."

Nevertheless they still circle around the periphery of this subject, confining themselves to pondering the subject of "revisionism in the economy as an instrument of the influence of subversive centers." In spite of this subtitle, the authors make no attempt to discuss or to describe any "centers of subversion," except for one marginal mention about the existence of a Russian Research Center at Harvard University. What it boils down to is simply their continued effort to prove the theory that revisionism in economic science amounts to subversion in economic practice. They take the opportunity to mention here the names of three RFE

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(7) These peculiar endeavors to list Kurowski among the "subversive" group explain a small mention on page 118: "As is known ... S. Kurowski has been praised by Z. Brzezinski himself."

(8) Zygmunt Szeliga, reviewing this book in Polityka of 1 August 1970, expresses apprehension that now, too, "one can surely expect that somebody is diligently collecting press clippings so that, after a year or perhaps 15 years have passed, he can quote various excerpts out of context as evidence of economic subversion... Brr..."

employees: Tadeusz Celt, Ludwik Frendl and Michal Gamarnikow, however not within the context of their activity in RFE, but on the strength of their publications.

### The Factors That Foster Economic Subversion

The final part of the book has a promising subtitle: "Economic subversion and the factors which foster it." Unfortunately, it is still difficult to find here any examples of this subversion, unless one agrees with the authors that, when the Americans act openly according to their own raison d'état or simply when they put into execution the principles of officially proclaimed American policy, this is, in itself, a form of subversion. According to such thinking, former Ambassador John A. Gronouski would also be a saboteur, because he once stated during an interview that: "there is talk (in Poland) about the use of laws which govern the market for distribution aims ... there is talk about decentralization ... all this is positive thinking." Therefore, if this statement by Gronouski is to serve as an example of subversion, what can one say about the following pronouncement by Boleslaw Jaszczuk, (9) also quoted in this book:

The market plays an important part in perfecting the system of planning in the field of consumer goods. The market is relatively the most accurate source of information about the real needs of the consumer, which makes possible adapting production to actual demand and in this avoids losses for the nation.

Such contradictions, bordering on the ridiculous, can be found throughout this book. The authors sometimes think, for instance, that the economic contacts between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Communist countries would save West Germany from the adverse effects of the competition provided by the USA and Japan. Here is a typical statement:

Because some of the capitalist countries, especially the USA and Japan, surpass the GFR in modern industrial

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(9) An excerpt from Jaszczuk's address at the 12th Plenum of the PUWP Central Committee, published in Nowe Drogi, August 1968, therefore at the time when views of this kind were formulated with utmost caution.



production, the industrial combines in the GFR, in fear of competition, strive to modernize their own production(...) In this situation, West Germany's industrial combines and firms are beginning to be interested in the socialist market.

Apparently, however, somebody who was asked to do a prepublication evaluation of this book had doubts concerning such "revolutionary" appraisals, because a little further on the authors magnanimously allow the possibility of other reasons for the above-mentioned co-operation:

The firms of West Germany desire also to develop trade with us on the basis of profitable returns (emphasis added).

### Subversion in Practice

The authors' desire was to be able to present to the reader tangible examples of "subversion." On the last few pages of their book, Florek and Szeffler, therefore, draw a dramatized picture of subversion in practice. This concerns schools of economic intelligence, economic penetration, spy trials, everything in the style of a thriller scenario. They scrupulously omit the names of the people or of the firms supposedly involved, although from time to time they touch ground with specific facts. Here is the result of one of these attempts:

For example, the editor-in-chief of the American periodical Electronics, during his stay in Poland, in the course of a conversation with certain specialists in the electronics field, collected detailed information concerning this branch of the industry, so very important to us. This collected information he used to negate our achievements and perspectives in the electronic industry in Poland. (emphasis added)

The argumentation on the subject of "subversion" in the field of patents is really quite funny. To begin with, the authors cry in protest against the opinion that "our discoveries could not be compared with the standard of discoveries in the West." After that, they cite statistics about numerous patents granted on the basis of discoveries made in various Western countries, mentioning

at the same time delays in the issuing of Western patents for discoveries made in Poland. All this is supposed to create the impression that the "bad capitalists" do not "allow us to conduct research (because they patent all discoveries), and whatever we manage to discover, they steal (because we do not patent our achievements)."

Probably only the authors themselves could possibly explain why the fact that the English ICI or the Italian Montecatini sell patents is presented in this book as an example of something in the nature of subversion. One can only guess that this is supposed to reveal certain accusations against people in Poland who are responsible for the purchase of these patents. In any case, this whole part of the book is clearly written on the basis of material supplied by the Ministry of the Interior and is full of all sorts of hazy insinuations and accusations.

#### Reactions to the Book

The appallingly low standard of this book, even when considering the purpose which this sort of publication serves, aroused reactions which can serve as an excellent test of political connections or sympathies. (10) The positive reactions are especially significant, because to be able to approve of such rubbish as that of Florek and Szeffler requires a considerable amount of self-denial or feelings of group solidarity. The range of the press notices about this book has confirmed with mathematical precision the scale of political differentiation within the propaganda apparatus. Not a single review is written in an indifferent tone. The reviewers either completely praised the work of Florek and Szeffler, or made fun of it. But the majority of the press simply refrained from getting involved in this "plebiscite" and ignored the appearance of the book.

The majority of reviews which did appear were positive. Besides the propaganda press (which simply reprints news agency reviews), the following reviewed the book positively: Prawo i Zycie (14 June 1970), Zolnierz Wolnosci (22 May 1970), and Kierunki (28 June 1970).

The review written by Pax chief economist Zenon Komender, which appeared in Kierunki, is especially characteristic. It is

(10) See Polish Situation Report/41, RFER, 24 July 1970, Item 2.

unusually long (about 2,500 words), and contains a meticulous summary of each part of the book. The author of this review completely agrees with the theories in the book, and obviously tries to polish its constructional shortcomings and even its style in his summary. One gets the impression that Komender treated his review of the book as an opportunity to help make it more popular.(11) At the same time, he tried to create the impression that the book contains well-thought-out reasoning. That which he adds himself boils down to an unusual accentuation of those parts of the book dealing with patriotism and internationalism.

The Prawo i Zycie review was by editor-in-chief Kazimierz Kakol, who until recently was considered a press spokesman for the Moczarites. The mere fact that the book is being popularized by leading representatives of various groups exercising pressure on the present establishment is evidence in itself of the kind of political connections Florek and Szeffler must enjoy. Although Kakol's review is shorter, it extols the authors' merits in greater degree than does Komender's. Kakol ends his review by expressing the conviction that the Florek and Szeffler book will become a "valuable addition for educational and instructional purposes," and that "this comparatively small edition will soon be sold out, and that it will become necessary to reprint this valuable work."

The review published in Zolnierz Wolnosci also popularizes this book. The reviewer states that this is the "first work of its kind, not only in Poland, but also in the socialist countries."

In the provincial press, the reviews were still more laudatory in tone. For instance, in the 11 June 1970 Glos Robotniczy, the reviewer stated that this book can be regarded as a "real scientific work." But the fact that almost all the reviews were full of praise should not lead to the conclusion that the entire press greeted this book with acclaim. It must be made clear

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(11) This is understandable if one takes into account the fact that Subversion in the Economy was published in a surprisingly small edition of 5,000 copies, while as a rule this type of propaganda publication is given an edition of some 20,000 to 30,000 copies. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that somebody with final say about the size of the edition reduced it, contrary to original design. We will return to this subject later.



that most dailies and periodicals ignored it, while the very influential and popular Polityka emphatically rejected the main ideas contained in Florek's and Szeffler's "creation." Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the earlier-quoted dailies and periodicals have no great influence on public opinion.

Zygmunt Szeliga, in the above-mentioned Polityka article, which bears the significant title, "Subversion and Disasterism," with unusual passion criticizes, ridicules and demolishes the argumentation and the theories contained in the book. Above all, Szeliga questions the excessively broadened definition of the word "subversion." He writes:

Subversion is an unequivocal word, it has a menacing sound, and appears in the penal code; therefore one ought to use it prudently and sparingly. Nonobservance of this rule, throwing into one bag everything that can be called subversion simply for the purpose of filling 11 pages of print, is harmful. It cuts off any discussion, in other words, an exchange of views, without which progress is impossible in any field, let alone the field economics.

Szeliga says he is convinced that subversion in general does exist in the economy, offers no counterproposition, but limits himself to pointing out examples of "subversive" activity in the broadcasts of "hostile radio stations." As an example of the overzealousness of the authors, Szeliga cites the listing of Michal Kalecki, Jan Mujzel, and Stefan Kurowski as "subversive elements." He also expresses fear that the method used by Florek and Szeffler "is a threat that many other esteemed economists and economic leaders may end up listed as subversive elements." Obviously with the latest Party resolutions in mind, Szeliga states:

... We reach out for the market mechanism, put into practice the concept of selecting investments according to the criterion of maximal effectiveness (which Kalecki once propagated), we ration employment, we differentiate wages, etc., -- in other words rank heresies and subversive thoughts.

Szeliga's second reproach against the authors is that they have



saturated their book with the "psychosis of disasterism," (12) which is expressed in the theory: "If bourgeois ideas about broadening relations with socialism are subversive in character, aim at undermining and even overthrowing socialism, etc., then these ideas ought to be rejected in toto. This is harmful disasterism which proves a lack of faith in the power of socialism." (emphasis in original)

Szeliga also questions the authors' attack on the idea of Marxism as an open system, which can also allow assimilation of non-Marxist achievements.

As far as the last part of the book is concerned, Szeliga simply scoffs at the authors. He says about the dramatized portion devoted to "subversion concerning patents":

Only the authors could explain what this subversion is actually supposed to be, but they do not do so in their book.

Szeliga ends his review with the following synthesized estimate:

A careful study of the Florek and Szeffler book leads to the conclusion that the authors did not accomplish a necessary and ambitious task. In an era of peaceful coexistence, characterized by growing contacts between both political systems and also growing competition between them, the problem of subversion in various domains of life requires precise definition. For we must know when we can take cover behind the

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- (12) Here Szeliga makes a seemingly trifling mistake which, however, has given his opponents a reason to question the honesty of his review. He used the drawing on the cover of the book as a symbolic example of how one can succumb to the psychosis of "disasterism." He thought the drawing to be "a spider's web ensharing -- this is pure speculation -- socialism." In fact, the drawing was supposed to represent a broken window-pane. This mistake was eagerly seized upon in subsequent polemics. Wanda Bronska-Pampuch, who reviewed the same book in the Süddeutsche Zeitung of 20 August 1970, made the same mistake.

screen of theory, and when we ought to have our hands free for work or for attack. It seems that the book by Florek and Szeffler, by debasing the very concept of subversion, cannot render service to our ideological front, and instead of giving the impression of being a work with scientific authority, merely succeeds in being ridiculous.

### Conclusion

On the strength of the above-described incident concerning publication of Florek and Szeffler's book, and the reactions to it, the following reflections come to mind.

First. It is quite obvious that anti-intellectual, opportunistic elements within the Party, in spite of being pushed onto the defensive, continue their attempts to demonstrate their negative stand on the political guideline finally beginning to dominate the scene. It is equally obvious that there exist -- although not many -- people who protect them and occasionally help them to voice their protests. It is difficult to preclude all doubts that "the protectors" may have other reasons for doing so, and that they count on some of the more zealous propagandists discrediting themselves.

Second. Only now, by watching the results of such excesses, can one plainly see how unrealistic are the slogans and the methods propagated by the Party two years ago. This book would have been a wild success in 1968. Today -- cut down to a disparagingly small edition -- it has only curiosity value, and it would need a united conspiracy by the entire dogmatic Party group to attract any attention at all, and even then, such a conspiracy could not effectively shut up those whose convictions against this sort of anachronistic view are stronger than fear of attack by the former dictators of propaganda.

Third. Although the ultimate defeat of these elements within the Party was quite obvious, even during the height of the campaign against "revisionism in the economy," (13) Szeliga's detrimental review is the first semiofficial admission that at least some of the people who were labeled "revisionists" were not

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(13) Vide Footnote 6.

revisionists at all. Therefore, if that view is not challenged by the contrary, and officially stated, stand of the Party, then Szeliga's review can be treated as evidence of revocation of this sort of accusation concerning a large part of Poland's economists.

Fourth. It seems to be an optimistic sign that the type of writing represented by this book has not found willing representatives who enjoy any sort of standing in economic circles. Both authors, and especially Henryk Florek, are people on the periphery of economic journalism.

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