

Chapter 13 Primary Sources

The Brezhnev Doctrine, 1968

In response to the efforts, early in 1968, of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party, under the leadership of Alexander Dubcek, to introduce a number of reforms, including the abolition of censorship, the Soviet Union adopted a policy of combating "anti-socialist forces". The policy became known as "Brezhnev Doctrine". Dubcek's movement, known as the "Prague Spring," was suppressed in an invasion. It was in November 1968, speaking before Polish workers, that Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev gave the following justification.

In connection with the events in Czechoslovakia the question of the correlation and interdependence of the national interests of the socialist countries and their international duties acquire particular topical and acute importance. The measures taken by the Soviet Union, jointly with other socialist countries, in defending the socialist gains of the Czechoslovak people are of great significance for strengthening the socialist community, which is the main achievement of the international working class. We cannot ignore the assertions, held in some places, that the actions of the five socialist countries run counter to the Marxist--Leninist principle of sovereignty and the rights of nations to self-determination. The groundlessness of such reasoning consists primarily in that it is based on an abstract, non-class approach to the question of sovereignty and the rights of nations to self-determination. The peoples of the socialist countries and Communist parties certainly do have and should have freedom for determining the ways of

advance of their respective countries. However, none of their decisions should damage either socialism in their country or the fundamental interests of other socialist countries, and the whole working class movement, which is working for socialism. This means that each Communist party is responsible not only to its own people, but also to all the socialist countries, to the entire Communist movement. Whoever forgets this, in stressing only the independence of the Communist party, becomes one-sided. He deviates from his international duty. Marxist dialectics are opposed to one-sidedness. They demand that each phenomenon be examined concretely, in general connection with other phenomena, with other processes. Just as, in Lenin's words, a man living in a society cannot be free from the society, one or another socialist state, staying in a system of other states composing the socialist community, cannot be free from the common interests of that community. The sovereignty of each socialist country cannot be opposed to the interests of the world of socialism, of the world revolutionary movement. Lenin demanded that all Communists fight against small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation, consider the whole and the general, subordinate the particular to the general interest. The socialist states respect the democratic norms of international law. They have proved this more than once in practice, by coming out resolutely against the attempts of imperialism to violate the sovereignty and independence of nations. It is from these same positions that they reject the leftist, adventurist conception of "exporting revolution," of "bringing happiness" to other peoples. However, from a Marxist point of view, the norms of law, including the norms of mutual relations of the socialist countries, cannot be interpreted narrowly, formally, and in isolation from the general context of class struggle in the modern world. The socialist countries resolutely come out against the exporting and importing of counterrevolution. Each Communist party is free to apply the basic principles of Marxism Leninism and of socialism in its country,

but it cannot depart from these principles (assuming, naturally, that it remains a Communist party). Concretely, this means, first of all, that, in its activity, each Communist party cannot but take into account such a decisive fact of our time as the struggle between two opposing social systems-capitalism and socialism. This is an objective struggle, a fact not depending on the will of the people, and stipulated by the world's being split into two opposite social systems. Lenin said: "Each man must choose between joining our side or the other side. Any attempt to avoid taking sides in this issue must end in fiasco." It has got to be emphasized that when a socialist country seems to adopt a "non-affiliated" stand, it retains its national independence, in effect, precisely because of the might of the socialist community, and above all the Soviet Union as a central force, which also includes the might of its armed forces. The weakening of any of the links in the world system of socialism directly affects all the socialist countries, which cannot look indifferently upon this. The antisocialist elements in Czechoslovakia actually covered up the demand for so-called neutrality and Czechoslovakia's withdrawal from the socialist community with talking about the right of nations to self-determination. However, the implementation of such "self-determination," in other words, Czechoslovakia's detachment from the socialist community, would have come into conflict with its own vital interests and would have been detrimental to the other socialist states. Such "self-determination," as a result of which NATO troops would have been able to come up to the Soviet border, while the community of European socialist countries would have been split, in effect encroaches upon the vital interests of the peoples of these countries and conflicts, as the very root of it, with the right of these people to socialist self-determination. Discharging their internationalist duty toward the fraternal peoples of Czechoslovakia and defending their own socialist gains, the U.S.S.R. and the other socialist states had to act decisively and they did act against the antisocialist forces in Czechoslovakia.

**The Interfactory Strike Committee (Solidarity) Twenty-One Demands, Gdańsk, Poland,
August 1980**

1. Acceptance of free trade unions independent of the Communist Party and of enterprises, in accordance with convention No. 87 of the International Labor Organization concerning the right to form free trade unions.
2. A guarantee of the right to strike and of the security of strikers.
3. Compliance with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech, the press and publication, including freedom for independent publishers, and the availability of the mass media to representatives of all faiths.
4. A return of former rights to: 1) People dismissed from work after the 1970 and 1976 strikes. 2) Students expelled because of their views. The release of all political prisoners, among them Edmund Zdrozinski, Jan Kozlowski, and Marek Kozlowski. A halt in repression of the individual because of personal conviction.
5. Availability to the mass media of information about the formation of the Inter-factory Strike Committee and publication of its demands.
6. Bringing the country out of its crisis situation by the following means: a) making public complete information about the social-economic situation. b) enabling all social classes to take part in discussion of the reform programme.
7. Compensation of all workers taking part in the strike for the period of the strike.
8. An increase in the pay of each worker by 2,000 zloty a month.

9. Guaranteed automatic increases in pay on the basis of increases in prices and the decline in real income.
10. A full supply of food products for the domestic market, with exports limited to surpluses.
11. The introduction of food coupons for meat and meat products (until the market stabilizes).
12. The abolition of commercial prices and sales for Western currencies in the so-called internal export companies.
13. Selection of management personnel on the basis of qualifications, not party membership, and elimination of privileges for the state police, security service, and party apparatus by equalization of family allowances and elimination of special sales, etc.
14. Reduction in the age for retirement for women to 50 and for men to 55, or (regardless of age) after working for 30 years (for women) or 35 years (for men).
15. Conformity of old-age pensions and annuities with what has actually been paid in.
16. Improvements in the working conditions of the health service.
17. Assurances of a reasonable number of places in day-care centers and kindergartens for the children of working mothers.
18. Paid maternity leave for three years.
19. A decrease in the waiting period for apartments.
20. An increase in the commuter's allowance to 100 złoty.
21. A day of rest on Saturday. Workers in the brigade system or round-the-clock jobs are to be compensated for the loss of free Saturdays with increased leave or other paid time off.