

Polish Political Prisoners of the Pro-NATO Regime

"Peace Prohibited". "Acceptance of Nazism"

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Global Research, June 02, 2023

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Law and Justice](#)

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Some scholars describe Poland's current political system with the term "illiberal", i.e. as preserving the external appearances of neoliberal parliamentary democracy, but with a limited level of human and civil rights.

This analysis seems incomplete. Poland is not an exception to the Western system, some relic of its own authoritarian past or a freak of local populist authoritarianism. On the contrary, the example of Poland can be used to trace the evolution that will almost certainly be shared by other countries subject to the neoliberal domination of the United States and the UK.

Present stage of imperialism

Dismantling the last appearances of parliamentarianism and the rule of law is an inherent feature of the present stage of imperialism. They become redundant, as historically only securing smooth functioning of capitalist Fordism, which is no longer needed today in the realities of global financialised capitalism.

Social consensus, acceptance of left-wing parties and trade unions, giving a certain scope of freedom of expression and organisation are useless for the dominating classes.

Poland shows that in the next phase of imperialism there will be an attempt to strengthen it through authoritarianism, in fact a mono-party system (now poorly concealed by the false division into 'ruling party / parliamentary opposition') and possible references to populist and outright fascist content, while of course maintaining neoliberal slogans and phraseology.

Acceptance of Nazism

In Poland, these processes have been accelerated, especially as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war, when surveillance, censorship and elimination of people and the whole anti-

system movements are carried out under the pretext of *“fighting against Russian influence”*.

The Polish prosecutor's office and courts willingly refer to the law penalising *“incitement to hatred on the basis of national, ethnic and racial differences”*, while recognising, that it prohibits also criticising the Banderite ideology, which is Ukraine's form of Nazism.

Courts in Poland recognise that *“Banderite”* is synonymous with Ukrainian, and therefore refers to this entire national group. Among those prosecuted for recalling the Volhynian Massacre (mass genocide perpetrated by the Ukrainian Nazis on Poles, Jews and Ukrainian anti-fascists during World War II) are, among others, Katarzyna Sokołowska and Andrzej Łukawski, working to commemorate the victims of Nazi crimes.

Four residents of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland were arrested for trying to organise civic patrols to protect neighbours from attacks of aggressive newcomers from Ukraine, exposing Nazi symbols.

Although formally Nazi signs are prohibited in Poland, neither the courts nor the police react to their increasing presence, recognizing that they are currently *“justified by the Ukrainian defence against Russian aggression”*. Protesting Poles face up to 2 years in prison.

Peace prohibited

“Praising Russian aggression against Ukraine” is also considered a crime in Poland now.

Henryk Mikietyń (71), one of the former leaders of the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) is among those convicted. Today, the KPP is banned in Poland, and the mere use of communist emblems can be punished.

Groups referring to the heritage of communist Poland, therefore, formed a coalition entitled the Polish Left Movement (PRL), taking part in numerous anti-war actions. This probably prompted the Court in Legnica to sentence H. Mikietyń to three months imprisonment conditionally suspended for a probationary period of two years. The Court also put him under the supervision of a probation officer, obliged him to undertake a 6-month voluntary service in *“an entity providing assistance to residents of Ukraine affected by the effects of the war”*, and ordered the confiscation of H. Mikietyń's mobile phone as a *“crime tool”*.

This is not solely a question of an anti-Communist stance by the Polish Government as well as the courts. In this regard, devoted catholic blogger Najjka was sentenced to five months of restriction of freedom through unpaid work for social purposes, when, quoting the Bible, she stipulated that she herself would not accept Nazis from Ukraine into her own home.

Similar judgments were handed down in other cases, including in Krakow, Wrocław, Świdnica and in many other Polish cities. The prosecutor's office investigates against activists of the Polish Anti-War Movement (PRA), such as Piotr Panasiuk from Lublin, for describing the alleged *“Bucha Massacre”* as a Ukrainian hoax.

Collaborators

In addition to the police and the prosecutor's office, critics of Poland's unilateral involvement in the Ukrainian conflict are pursued by numerous non-governmental organizations, mostly

financed by... the Government and their Western sponsors. Neither Amnesty International nor the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights took any action to defend those convicted and detained for criticising Nazism. On the contrary, the Helsinki Foundation publicly praised the new practice of the Polish Government as an example of the *"fight against hate speech"*. Both organisations do not mind about Ukrainian Nazi symbols and speeches in Polish public space.

The fight intensifies

Mateusz Piskorski, PhD, former MP and then founder and leader of the anti-imperialist, left-wing CHANGE party was arrested in 2016 and for three years he was held in prison without trial on charges of *"cooperation with Russian and Chinese intelligence"*. He was released following the intervention of the United Nations Working Group, which investigated the lack of rule of law in Poland.

To this day, however, Piskorski is under strict police surveillance, he cannot leave the country, and his court case is pending.

Janusz Niedźwiecki, a human rights activist, is in prison for the last two years as an organiser of the election observation missions in the former Soviet Union, accused of *"espionage for China"*.

Further amendments to the Polish Penal Code include the introduction of criminal liability for *"unintentional forms of espionage"* (up to 5 sentences in prison), as well as for the crime of *"disinformation involving the dissemination of false or misleading information"* (up to 8 years). In this regard, the mandates of the Internal Security Agency are slated to be significantly expanded.

It can therefore be assumed that the number of political prisoners in Poland may only increase in the coming months.

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