

Lenin's Tomb

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2007

Neocon Cold Warrior Booed in Warsaw. [posted by lenin](#)

Guest post by *Andy Zebrowski*:

Neocon godfather Norman Podhoretz was jeered and heckled at Warsaw University last Friday (January 26).

Students against the War organized a picket of Podhoretz's meeting on "world leadership". The protest was backed by the "Stop the War Initiative" (comprising left wingers, greens and the unaffiliated). Just before the meeting was due to start the picket ended and the protesters went inside to challenge the pro-war panel.

The other speakers apart from Podhoretz were two Polish conservatives – extremist hawk and defence minister Radoslaw Sikorski and academic/politician Ryszard Legutko.

Sikorski is a member of the American Enterprise Institute which includes such luminaries of the right as Richard Perle and Newt Gingrich.

As the meeting started there was an attempt by the organizers to prevent people displaying sheets of paper on which were printed slogans such as "Podhoretz liar for empire OUT!", "George W. Bush – terrorist no. 1", "Down with US. Imperial terror", "Troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan" and "No anti-missile shield in Poland".

Six people were ejected from the meeting, three of them were dragged along the floor. Their crime? The odd shouted protest – for instance, "Abu Ghraib", "Terrorist" and "Shame!".

After the speakers had finished people were not allowed to speak from the floor. Instead they had to write questions on pieces of paper and pass them up to the platform for the chair to read out. A fantastic example of neocon democracy in action! Many people walked out in disgust.

Podhoretz had argued for attacking Iran, denied there had been torture at Abu Ghraib and praised Bush. None of the speakers mentioned the word "oil".

You can see a short film of the protest here:



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The day before the meeting opinion poll results were published about whether the US plays a negative or positive role in the world. The poll covered twenty-five countries. The Polish result showed the biggest drop in those seeing the US role as positive – it fell from 62 to 38 percent a huge fall of 24 percentage points. Whilst still the highest of the European results it shows a marked downward trend which is probably set to continue.

This is because the current Polish right-wing government is continuing and intensifying its postcommunist predecessors ultraloyalist stance towards Washington. When other states are reducing their presence in Iraq Poland is maintaining its troop levels – currently about 900. In Afghanistan Poland is in the process of upping its soldier numbers from 180 to 1200 by April. This was why it recently received fulsome praise from NATO secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. Poland's rulers love such praise - they hope to strengthen their international position by being included among Bush's most faithful allies.

But ordinary people in this country don't support Bush's wars. Poland was among the first four invading states alongside the US, Britain and Australia. However, opinion surveys have consistently shown opposition to the occupation of Iraq at between 70 and 75 percent. Sending extra troops to Afghanistan is also opposed by a majority of the population as is the siting part of Bush's "anti-missile shield" in Poland.

Today the illusions of many people in US presidents have been dispelled thanks to their government's servility, Bush and the global anti-war movement.

Andy Zebrowski is a member of Pracownicza Demokracja (Workers' Democracy).

