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## The Barbarians and the Thieves

The political scene in Poland is known to be volatile and unpredictable. This is due to the most unfair and complicated proportional election law that is always modified to favour ruling parties to give them better odds in each upcoming election. Secondly it is because politics in Poland are characterized by the constant manipulation of public opinion in all major newspapers, radio and TV.

This time however, brought about the sudden demise of the ruling SLD party, comprised of former Communists. They have ruined the country with their ineptitude, greed and corruption and irresponsible abuses of the internal and external debt. Suddenly the SLD is "dead" and the political scene has been monopolized by "Platforma Obywatelska" - Citizen Platform and "Samoobrona" - Self Defence. These two highly polarized parties are to replace the monopoly of political power held so far by the ex-communists. The new political slogan in this fight is "Barbarians & Thieves", paraphrased from an infamous book by Witold Jedlicki; "The Boors and the Jews".

The Barbarians are the "Samoobrona". Mostly rough, uneducated but smart agricultural peasants skillfully directed by a handful of former Communists. Lately their popularity has been rising fast in the polls. The slide of support for former Communists of the SLD to a single digit in recent polls, has prompted many members of the SLD to jump ship to "Samoobrona" to stay in power. This is of no surprise as it is commonly known that "Samoobrona" became a known political party with the help of heavy financial support from the SLD. Now even the official organ of the SLD, the national daily "Trybuna" is praising the reckless "Samoobrona" as a being responsible political party and able to govern the country.

The Thieves are the "Platforma Obywatelska", vel Unia Wolnosci, vel Unia Demokratyczna, vel Komitety Obywatelskie of Lech Walesa, vel KOR. Frequent name changes were necessitated by a constant loss of popularity of this group. However with quick name changes and support of the omnipresent Jewish controlled media, they have been running neck and neck in the popularity polls with "Samoobrona". They have now openly declared "Samoobrona" as their main opponent and promised to fight them to the end.

Poles will have to decide in the future election who is going to govern them - Communist financed "Samoobrona" or the George Soros financed Thieves from the neo-liberal "Platforma". Many say that the open war declaration by "Platforma" will misfire on them as most voters will opt for the Barbarians. But the Thieves will argue that they are smarter than the Barbarians and will use international connections to lift Poland out of the worst crisis since it opted to be a free market economy.

But whoever wins, they will certainly lose. There are many stumbling blocks to the

possibility of quick success. Poland's total debt is now 100 billion dollars and growing. The budget deficit is almost 60% of the GNP. Retirement plans are mostly bankrupt and there is no possibility of recovery as 80% of the university graduates want to work abroad. Even if they stayed in Poland it would not help much to finance any reasonable retirement as the average salary of a university graduate is just over \$400 per month. Official unemployment is at the highest level ever, over 20%. The national health system has virtually collapsed and for years it has been plagued by nurse and doctor protests and strikes. There is not much money flowing from the proceeds of privatization, which has been filling budget holes until now. On top of that Poland has been burdened with the huge purchase of American F-16 jet fighters and got involved in a costly war in Iraq. The Polish military budget is four times larger than that of nuclear Pakistan. This month of May, Poland will join the European Union and in the same moment will lose preferential export tariffs in the USA. Plus it will face fierce product competition from much stronger, more greedy and desperate members of the EU. To add to this myriad of problems, Poland is totally dependent on the delivery of heating gas from Russia, who have already turned off the tap once this year.

Poland is now on the brink of total collapse but with high quality leadership it can rise to grow and prosper. The problem is that much like the defunct SLD, neither Thieves nor the Barbarians have quality leaders capable of eliminating the budget deficit, re-negotiating the international contracts and stimulating the job market. This is because these the very same people are the source of the problems in Poland. They have been on the political scene for many years but have always preferred vindication and extortion to quality leadership. Even now the Thieves are running a negative political campaign against the Barbarians. "Lesser evil" campaigns are popular in Poland and always mean the election of mediocre leaders, much like in the USA.

At the same time the political center of Poland is vacant and ready for a new political party of honest and capable individuals, who will solve many problems and put the country in order. Neither greedy liberal Thieves or power hungry leftist Barbarians can come up with a centric common sense approach that most Poles would favour with their election votes. Members of both parties have learned to perform and tap dance at their political meetings and TV shows but there is a big difference between amateur dancing and professional hard work.

Who will rule Poland after the next election, Barbarians or Thieves? Or someone else? For many Poles it is a "to be or not to be" question. If you live there and care the about future of Poland, you must find the answer. For the vote for a better future for Poland is in your hands like never before.

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