

May 19, 2005

Candidates free of charge

This is a year of important elections in Poland. The time has come to call a new election for the President and both upper and lower houses of Parliament. Major political parties are calling conventions to nominate their candidates and election fever is starting to show. However there is a big silence on the subject of fundraising, which is the most important issue in mature democracies of the world.

Fundraising is a crucial indicator of any political candidate anywhere else but in Poland. For in Poland only the government-owned polling institutions indicate popularity of the candidates. But in a real world the best indication of popularity is the amount of funds raised for an election campaign from individual voters and institutions.

There are several reasons for this silence on the subject of political fundraising in Poland. The main reason is that all major political parties are inter-related, playing the roles of rulers and opposition. This relationship is solidified by a funding rule where any political party that enters Parliament can claim the cost of election expenses of their campaign. Having all that money at their disposal there is little need to seek financial support from the electorate.

Another reason for silence on the subject of fundraising is the ignorance of the people on the basic issues of the democratic process. For the Poles raised during half a century of communism do not understand how important it is to support their candidates with money. They are accustomed to vote for the candidates presented to them by a state at no charge.

This lack of experience and ignorance of the importance of political fundraising precludes people from genuine candidates, who will truly represent their national interests. Combine that with a manipulative proportional election law and the result is a perpetual “mafia” type political establishment that has gripped Poland like a mortal cancer to extract all possible wealth.

When I ask Poles who want me to run for office again for financial support, I see disoriented stares and shock of surprise. For no other political candidate has ever asked them for money. They have never given any money to a political candidate.

This is very sad as you always get what you pay for. In the world of politics, “free” candidates are the most expensive as they always try to recover money spent on political campaigns with mischievous corruption.

Just look at the so-called “official” presidential candidates and see how much money have they received from their electorates. They will show you the results of the “official” polls, but none of them will tell you how much money have they raised from the people.

As for myself in 1990 I paid for my entire election campaign with my personal after-tax savings from Canada. In terms of the cost per vote the price was low, only 9 cents per vote. In terms of fundraising I received only \$600 from the four million people who voted for me during the entire campaign, which lasted 2 months.

This time the cost of an election campaign is much higher, up to \$1 per vote. I pray that my fellow Poles quickly learn the importance of fundraising and start collecting money for the candidates they trust. For our long time enemies have unlimited funds for their candidates promoted by national press, and this way they are hoping to win. As always, political chessboard has already been set in a check-mate formation and only united effort of fund raising can upset this game.

I will go a step further to warn my compatriots that a passive approach to the election this year will be disastrous for them. It would be synonymous with a surrender of their rights and the rights of future generations. For this year Poland, unless it rises up and gets away from the political “elite” that has been leaching our country for 60 years, is destined for total demise. It will lose national character and the ability to negotiate its place as a nation in a very competitive and ambitious world.

During my years abroad I have learnt many valuable lessons about democracy, politics and the importance of a sovereign government. Poles have a chance to define a glorious future this year and retain Poland as a homeland that cares for them. Fundraising, not only votes, is one of the important tools to win this battle.

The future of Poland is in your hands and your pockets. Even \$1 from each potential voter can change the outcome of this fight. Now that you are no longer ignorant of the importance of fundraising, send some money to the candidate of your choice. Make the democratic process real to stop the fantasy imposed on you by the rules of a game that is not fair. Put your money where your mouth is to favor a decisive win. Anything less than that will leave you in shame.

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