

**June 15, 2004**

**Poland: now poorest country in Europe**

Poland has become the second poorest country of European Union. Gross national product (GNP) in Poland per person is only 46% of the average country in the European community. Only Latvia has a lower GNP – 42%. The paradox is that while Poland is very poor it is also one of the most expensive countries with its overvalued currency that prevents any substantial exports.

It has taken the post-communists only 15 years to impoverish a country that was one of the major exporters of food products, machines, ships, trains, coal and steel. The cynical and treacherous ex-members of the Communist Party of Poland have been selfishly selling the country's best assets to foreigners in exchange for political support and grafts and to cover the ever- growing deficit of their budgets. The previously popular "Solidarity" movement has proven to be the proverbial elephant on clay legs, or a toothless tiger with its membership dwindling to one tenth of what it was 15 years ago.

"Solidarity" is now lamenting that one quarter (5 million) of the Polish labor force are unemployed. Another 5 million only have part time jobs. In summary only half of the Polish labor force have full time jobs. This is an incredible waste of human resources. However, the heartless and cynical post-communists, led by former apparatchik President Alexander Kwasniewski, only think of themselves, using their influence and political power to generate their own private wealth that will last generations. Openly voices are heard: "what is good for post-communists, must be good for Poland".

A typical example of these "strong arm" tactics is Kwasniewski's current attempt to replace the president of the Polish oil company "ORLEN" with the help of Marek Belka, his only candidate to be the next Prime Minister. The government owns barely 10% of the shares of "ORLEN" but is acting like a majority shareholder because he has the backhanded support of the President.

Now that his long time buddy Leszek Miller is no longer Prime Minister of Poland (he was forced to resign when his popularity had dropped to single digit percentage points), President Kwasniewski seems to have palace-raised Belka take care of some of his unfinished private business, and against the wishes of most Poles, he stubbornly resists calling for a new election any time soon.

It is worthwhile to remember that in 1996 Kwasniewski was almost impeached by the Polish Parliament when a group of opposition members requested an investigation in the participation of the theft of approx. 80 million US dollars of public funds and controversial investment in a private insurance company "Polisa", mostly owned by his wife. He was saved only by a few votes of his loyal members of the SLD party, comprised mostly of the former communists of Poland.

In 1990, as a presidential candidate, I spent a few hundred thousand dollars of my savings and lost my voice during the 2 month campaign to forewarn Poles of the bad intentions of the post-communists and corrupt, self-declared leaders of the “Solidarity” trade union. They even tried to put me in jail without sentencing when I accused Mazowiecki government of treason. Even though I managed to get the support of 4 million votes this was not enough to prevent disaster and Poland once gain fell into the hands of people obsessed with corruption, manipulation, militarization, privatization and globalization. The post-communists acted out the famous story of “red Tiburon” and dressed up as a grandmother who turned out to be a wolf and who has eaten most of Poland’s resources.

But in 1990 Poles were not ready for a major change and had false hopes that America, thankful for their fights with the communists would assist them with another Marshall Plan, like that in Germany after the war. What they got in return was commercial pig processors banned in the USA, Washington pressure to buy a great number of jet fighters and an invitation to give up their lives in Iraq. The only help given to Poland was political support to the treacherous post-communists with a proverbial pat on the back. Even greedy major European countries have been less aggressive towards Poland.

The only way for Poland to come up from the bottom of the European poverty list is to get rid of the people who have caused this ugly state of affairs. Poland is still a rich country and can grow and prosper but only without post-communist leeches at the helm. This requires the removal of the “red” president and his “red” guard from the parliament and key positions in government administration and the banking system. They are in power only because of the unfairness of the “proportional” election law that favors political parties versus individual members of parliament. Only “direct” election law can provide the basis for election with true representation in Poland and election of a President who is like a patriotic caretaker and a father, not a compulsive thief.

Only a minor change in the constitution is needed to change election law from “proportional” to “direct”. According to a latest poll, this issue has gained the support of a majority vote in referendum. To get a referendum started, citizens need to collect 500,000 signatures.

One would expect that in a situation where half the Poles are unemployed, or underemployed, collecting 500,000 signatures for change to a better life is an easy task. But the reader must not forget that in post-communist society, the predominant factor is the fear of exposure. While it is easy to vote with a secret ballot card, an open declaration of support for a controversial issue might provoke persecution from the post-communist government or administration officials. It does not matter if these are real or imagined fears. As long as this psychosis exists there is little chance for improvement.

Those patriots who are fearless and brave individuals may want to check the information on [www.jow.pl](http://www.jow.pl). JOW is an a-political movement of citizens that for several years has been actively promoting the necessity of change of the election law. They are collecting 500,000 signatures to change this ugly law. If you want a better future for Poland, you can help them now.

As post-communist dominated organizations such as “Rzeczpospolita” or the related “Platforma Obywatelska” party are trying to take over the initiative of this important referendum, be careful not to be led astray. The only truly patriotic citizens movement that can bring about the result of change is JOW.

Stan Tyminski  
stan@transduction.com