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Dreams of free Poland

Recently the 15-year anniversary of the Round Table deal was celebrated with great fanfare by the post-communist media in Poland that was led by the national daily "Gazeta Wyborcza". But all newspapers, without exception, glorified this sad event where the communist government compromised the opposition known as "Solidarity" at that time. Apparently those Round Table talks were to prevent bloodshed in Poland but it turned out to be a simple case of giving a minor share of power to the opposition in exchange for a guarantee to keep most political and financial power in the hands of the former Communists. I use the word "Communists" here loosely to describe the representatives of the political regime in Poland, which was imposed and controlled by the Soviet Union. In fact none of those people who have ruled Poland for so long are a communist, because only personal greed is on their minds.

I remember seeing compromising photos of the high level members of the communist government and "Solidarity" lying in a drunken stupor over each other on the floor. These photos until this day cannot be published in "free" Poland for fear of political persecution. Silent Poland witnessed only promotional glimpses of the Round Table talks on the state TV. But for most Poles, who suffered communist oppression and persecution for almost half of century, it was clear that the "Round Table" talks were compromised from the beginning to the end. Now, 15 years after those "Round Table" talks it is clear that the 600 participants who were present at this event are clear winners in terms of political and financial gains. People of the former Communist Party of Poland are the biggest winners of them all. But they had to share the winning with some of their "Solidarity" friends.

No wonder that only a year later, given a chance to change the post- Round Table deal, in two rounds of a very difficult presidential election of 1990, four million Poles said NO both to the former Communists (SLD) and "Solidarity" and trusted me, a newcomer on the political front with their votes. They really wanted to live in a country free of political deals and political party rules. I did not lose that election, the Poles who voted for me lost it and thus lost their future. Who won? Without a doubt, the group present at the Round Table talks, led by Adam Michnik, self-promoted leader of the opposition in Poland. Today this man, who used to slander me as a communist collaborator in his foreign sponsored propaganda tube of "Gazeta Wyborcza", over the years has become the greatest defender of post-communist interests. So one might say that the Poland of Michnik, formerly of "Solidarity" also has won money and power and the Poland of Tyminski lost as the outcome of the "Round Table". Recent polls show most Poles believe that this Michnik is the number 3 man holding political power in Poland.

Learned people say that only through a definite change of mentality can the nation over the course of time change the economy and politics. The former communists and compromised members of opposition know that and they demand strict loyalty and self-

ensorship from all the Polish media such as TV, radio and press. There is practically no free press in Poland that will objectively talk about all problems and concerns. How thus can Poles change their mentality when one of the pillars of democracy - free and independent press - is of no use to them at all?

Censorship of the press is always a sign of fear of the people of a dying political regime. Those who have retained much political and financial power through the Round Table deal still do not feel secure. This is why with each new Parliamentary election they devise an ever more complicated proportional election law, where the citizens are forced to vote on the political parties but not for their direct representatives. The election law in Poland has become the most ugly tool of blatant political manipulation. It practically guarantees perpetual political power to the ex-members of the Round Table talks.

For this reason Poland has no political leaders of the true kind. Only manipulative political parties rule Poland and they promote their own selfish interests. There is no long-range planning at all, only frantic patches of rushed decisions under the pressure of politics. Furthermore, as the post-communist leaders cannot get support in Poland they look for it elsewhere and notoriously become sleazy vassals of countries in far away lands. Only treason for the sake of political survival is on their minds. They pamper the Polish militaries with a huge budget that is 4 times larger than that of nuclear Pakistan. But even military protection cannot remove their fear of hate by the nation. The post-communist Premier received only a single digit approval in recent polls.

Many people ask me what next, how can Poland break out of this vicious cycle? My answer is that we can start building a new, prosperous Poland anytime but only without political thieves and manipulators. We need political leaders who are true patriots, not vassals who serve other countries first. We need fearless leaders of vision, who will not compromise national interests in favor of their own pockets. We need to replace this bunch of former communist apparatchiks and their buddies from the fake opposition who sold us out at the Round Table talks. Only new leaders of the stature of George Washington or Abraham Lincoln can help us to wrench Poland from the post-communist hands.

Recent polls state that 84% of the students at Polish universities want to seek work abroad. What is pushing those brightest and most capable young people out of their own country? Lack of true leadership, lack of truth and lack of reason to stay forces them out, just like during the years of communist oppression.

During the communist years in Poland when borders were tightly sealed, a handful of us managed to escape to seek a new life abroad in a free and reasonable world. Many of us Polish refugees had a bad recurring dream: we go back to Poland and the Communists keep us there against our will. We wake up during this dream in sweat, suffering from post-communist trauma...

I know that great changes are never easy and always demand a high price, even in terms of spilled blood. But now I dream of my Poland when we can trust our leaders, and

foreign-sponsored thieves and manipulators will no longer be proclaimed as heroes in our free and independent press. There is no law against dreams; even in post-communist Poland they will not punish you for that. I have no doubt that new Poland will be born from those dreams, Poland that belongs to the people, not just a handful of a chosen few.

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