

Interpreting Poland

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AN OUTLINE OF RECENT EVENTS

The direction of political changes in Poland has recently been debated in the European Parliament. Here, in a nutshell, is the chronicle of relevant events. In 2015 elections, a previously unknown candidate Andrzej Duda won the presidency while Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice) received the plurality of votes. Two new parties, Kukiz-15 and Nowoczesna.pl, gained substantial presence in the parliament. Significantly, after a twenty-five-year presence on the Polish political scene, the SLD (former communist) party did not make it to the parliament, while the PSL (People's Party) barely reached the election threshold. Two small parties, Razem and Korwin, reached the 3 percent election threshold, which made them eligible for budgetary subsidies for parties; however, their role is negligible. These changes can be compared with the 2001 elections when the AWS and UW parties did not even enter the parliament, and the new parties that did were Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform), Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Samoobrona (Self-Defense), and Liga Polskich Rodzin (League of Polish Families). After the 2005 election Prawo i Sprawiedliwość had to enter a coalition with Samoobrona and Liga Polskich Rodzin to form a government. These two small parties are now extinct. In 2007 a new coalition of Platforma Obywatelska and PSL was formed. The coalition ruled for eight years and was defeated in the 2015 election.

The 2015 competition had its dark horse: Paweł Kukiz, who unexpectedly took third place in the first round of the presidential election. The slogan "fighting the system" gained him the votes of people who viewed the coalition government of PO and PSL critically, but were not supportive of PiS. What is perplexing about the phenomenon of Kukiz's success is that his slogan of "fighting the system" enjoyed instant popularity, even though the "system" remained undefined, as did the methods of fighting it. The

fiasco of the referendum on the single-member constituencies, which the Kukiz party advocated supports that view. As we observe the public debate, we conclude that PO seems to be at a loss as to why it lost the election, PiS why it won, and the Kukiz-15 why it made it to parliament to begin with.¹

DEMOCRATIC VERSUS OLIGARCHIC CAPITALISM

In order to explain the turn of events in Poland I focus on the concept of the system **while using the theses and theoretical assumptions of the social theory that can be named non-Marxian historical materialism.**² In light of that theory politics, economy, and culture constitute autonomous but similarly organized realms of public life. In each of them social minorities emerge that maximize their specific interests: power regulation, profit, and spiritual supremacy, respectively. The foundation for the appearance of social classes is material social means. In politics they are *means of coercion*. Depending on the position with respect to those means, two social classes can be distinguished: a class of rulers that decides how to use and distribute them, and a class of citizens that does not have that ability. In the realm of economy people are either owners or direct producers, according to their access to the *means of production*. In culture there are two social classes, defined by their relationship to the *means of persuasion* (television, radio, press, and the Internet): the "priests" who decide which ideas are to be popularized, and the "followers" who do not have that power. These antagonistic pairs of social classes have contradictory interests: the rulers aim at maximizing power regulation, and citizens at maximizing social autonomy; owners tend to maximize profit, employees their own income; "priests" want the greatest possible spiritual domination and "believers" spiritual autonomy.

In terms of the social theory assumed here, democracy can be defined as a class-balanced society in which the classes of rulers, owners, and "priests" have similar influence and are able to realize their social interests without the support of the other dominant social classes.³ Social conflicts between rulers and citizens (in politics), owners and direct producers (in the

economy), and “priests” and “followers” (in culture) are solved by way of compromises and of concessions made by the dominant classes on behalf of the dominated. Moreover, the state of social peace is strengthened by class alliances formed across the power line, whereby a class that is dominant in one realm of life offers support to a class that is dominated in a different domain.

For example, rulers intervene in economic life and support direct producers in their conflict with owners, in this way contributing to social peace in the economy. Owners, on the other hand, counterbalance the rulers’ advantage over citizens by helping the latter class limit the power of the former, bolstering social peace in politics. In turn, social peace in both the political and social realms facilitates social peace between “priests” and “followers.” Peace in that realm is conditional upon the dispersed distribution of the means of indoctrination, which ensures world-view and ideological pluralism.

It can be assumed that democratic capitalism is an empirical approximation of a class-balanced society. In that form of government everyone has the right to free elections, the creation of political parties, private property, the creation of labor unions, and the freedom of belief and religion. That fragile social balance can be disturbed by a “horizontal” direction of social alliances formed not by a dominant and a dominated social class, as is the case in a class-balanced society, but between the dominant classes.

For example, owners in economic-political oligarchization reach for political support of their interests. That support can be given in various forms. Rulers can limit the role of labor unions, regulate the relationships between employers and employees, lower the costs of production (tax exemptions), or secure the realization of extraordinary profits (concessions, public procurements). Rulers may use the owners’ material resources to weaken the control exerted over their own class by the civil society. For instance, since the high costs of running a political campaign can only be covered by political parties with sufficient

financial means, new political parties are at a significant disadvantage in their competition with the established ones. That restricts the political market to a limited choice of candidates.

The oligarchization of the political and economic realms also has a negative influence on ideological and worldview pluralism. Rulers set the fees for radio and television broadcast licenses and determine, together with entrepreneurs, where advertisements will be placed. The oligarchization of social life is also manifested in economic scandals, corruption, clientelism, or favoritism, which distort competition in the political, economic, and media markets.

In an oligarchic society the clashing interests of rulers and citizens, owners and direct producers, priests and believers are reconciled by disadvantaging lower classes by limiting their autonomy, income, and intellectual freedom which adds fuel to the social conflict. **Such oligarchization of social life leads to the creation of what was called a “system” in the 2015 election campaign. The beginnings of the system reach as far back as 1989, when Polish capitalism assumed, from its very beginning, the oligarchic form.**⁴ The core of this oligarchization was the process of the “enfranchisement of the *nomenklatura*.” It can be defined as “the exchange of current political privileges, associated with the position of a person in the administrative hierarchy of the political apparatus, for economic capital.”⁵ The main shareholders of *nomenklatura* companies were people from the ruling milieu—the higher officials of the Polish United Workers’ Party and the administrative workers of the state—who became the actual owners of state assets with only a small financial input. **A new company, entering into an agreement with the mother company, took over some of its assets: office space, warehouses, know-how, technological lines. The new *nomenklatura* company specialized in the same branch of production as the mother company and took over some of its orders and clients and, consequently, profits.** These initiatives served the purpose of transferring capital from the state sector to the private one, which would have been impossible

if the people doing so did not have the political influence to ensure the stability and safety of the transfer. As a result of these processes, corrupt privatization and corrupt-clientelist economy took root.⁶

This was facilitated by the shock therapy of economic reforms that have drastically lowered employee income and excluded a significant part of society from participation in the transfer of ownership. For example, in January 1990 industrial production declined by over 30 percent and the national income fell by 11 percent. In the years 1990–1991 the real income from work on individual farms plummeted to 40.3 percent and employee salaries decreased to 65.9 percent.⁷ The liberalization of foreign trade resulted in a flood of cheap foreign products and contributed to the bankruptcy of national producers who were not able to withstand the competition, as well as to unemployment. In the years 1990–1992 the number of unemployed rose to three million people. According to Tadeusz Kowalik, it was “not so much a transformation-related recession, perceived as the inevitable cost of great changes, but a recessive transformation, i.e., a great social change effected by means of a recession as a tool for creating a polarized society.”⁸

The assumed model of privatization favored foreign capital and obstructed the formation of a domestic class of capitalists, other than those related to the state apparatus. According to Kazimierz Poznański’s calculation, state assets were sold for about 9 to 12 percent of their free-market value.⁹ The shortcomings of domestic industry are reflected in the structure of Polish exports, of which the share of the profits from the sale of advanced technologies is presently 7 percent of GDP (in Germany it is 16 percent).¹⁰ Additionally, capitalism without domestic owners is less sensitive to employee pressure or state regulations. The data of the National Labor Inspectorate show that during the first decade of transition two-thirds of the controlled companies did not pay salaries to their employees on time and did not have a union organization.¹¹ Stanisław Gomułka estimates that the productivity of Polish employees is equal to two-thirds of the productivity of employees in Western countries, while Polish salaries only

reach one-fourth of the salaries there.¹² That disparity is also reflected in the percentage of employee salaries in the Polish GDP, 35.6 percent, while in Germany it is 51 percent and in Denmark 59 percent.¹³ The so-called “trash agreements” (*umowy śmieciowe*) that offer no benefits are becoming an increasingly popular form of employment in Poland. Two million Poles have emigrated for economic reasons. The growing income inequality is not balanced by social spending, which is well below the European average and constitutes 18.1 percent of the Polish GDP compared to 29.5 percent in Germany and 34.6 percent in Denmark.¹⁴

IS CAPITAL THE ONLY THING THAT DOES NOT HAVE A MOTHER COUNTRY? ABOUT NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL CLASSES

In the last decade in Poland the oligarchization of capitalism has aggravated economic and social divisions and confirmed the peripheral position of the Polish economy in the international system of the division of work. That phenomenon has not been eliminated by the accession of Poland to the European Union. Furthermore, globalization and integration processes have generated a new social phenomenon: the separation of the heretofore uniform national and supranational social classes. Generally speaking, members of a dominant social class (rulers, owners, and “priests”) realize their social interests primarily within their national society that constitutes a natural reference point for them. The scope of the realization of interests of a particular social class is the result of the forces of juxtaposing the social classes operating in a particular realm of national social life: rulers and citizens in politics, owners and direct producers in the economy, “priests” and “followers” in culture.

The creation of the transnational classes changes the mechanism of realization of interests of the particular social classes. This realization is not a vector of the social forces of antagonistic classes within one national society, but a consequence of the global social interest of a transnational class to whose wishes the local social classes have to adapt. In conditions of globalization the movements originating in one nation only have a small chance of succeeding. The pace and scope

of emerging national and transnational classes vary depending on the realm of social life. For example, global corporations invest and move their operations to countries in which the local authorities offer the most attractive conditions such as cheap labor, tax exemption, and desirable regulations of economic activity. These globalization processes have brought about the dominance of foreign capital in the Polish economy. Foreign entities have a 60 percent share in the Polish banking sector, compared to 5 percent in Germany and 10 percent in Denmark.¹⁵ **Over 83 percent of the largest Polish companies are owned by foreign entities.**¹⁶ Bartłomiej Radziejewski estimates that “in the years 2001–2003, six billion zloties were siphoned off from Poland. In the following three years this sum grew to 29 billion zloties, and in the last three years, 56 billion.”¹⁷ In 2013 the economic entities with foreign capital took 82 million zloties out of the Polish economy, which is equivalent to 5 percent of GDP.¹⁸

In the cultural realm there also are national and transnational classes of “priests.” While they make the decisions about which ideas, views, information, and comments are to be popularized, they are not the authors of these ideas or information.¹⁹ They transfer a part of their decision-making power to people who realize the assigned tasks of media production. These people are editors, department managers, and journalists who, by being employed in media belonging to foreign capital, become the local link of the chain of the transnational class of “media priests.”

Let us consider an example pertaining to the press market. In 2014 746 million copies of various press publications were sold in Poland. They were published by nineteen media concerns, of which nine were foreign and ten Polish. Foreign publishers own 138 magazines, with a total circulation of 567 million copies, while Polish publishers own 47 titles with a total circulation of 178 million copies. Thus **76 percent of the Polish press market is controlled by foreign-funded entities**, while domestic entities have only a 24 percent share of the market.²⁰

The Bauer Media concern has a 39 percent share in the Polish press market. It publishes thirty-nine magazines specializing in luxury, advice, youth, computer, and women’s issues. The Swiss and German concern Ringier Axel Springer, with a 16 percent share of the market, publishes sports, information, social and key political periodicals such as *Fakt* and *Newsweek Polska*. The German concern Verlagsgruppe Passau, with a 15 percent share of the Polish market, virtually monopolizes the local press owning twenty out of the twenty-four most popular regional daily newspapers in fifteen voivodeships. These three German publishers control 70 percent of the Polish press market. As regards the Internet, **foreign capital owns the three largest Internet portals.** *Onet.pl* is owned by Ringier Axel Springer; *Wirtualna Polska* by four shareholders: European Media Holding, Orfe S.A., 10xS.A., and Albemuth Inwestycje; while *Interia* belongs to Bauer Media. These three portals are visited by 42 million people each month.

The media influence should not be understood in simplistic terms. A newspaper published by a German concern does not have to automatically represent the German point of view, however it is understood. Before arriving at such conclusions, a comprehensive analysis of the content produced by the foreign-owned media should be made. To my knowledge, this has not yet been undertaken by anyone. But some conclusions can be drawn. For instance, the influence of foreign capital on the Polish media market is reflected in the way the aim of the publishing activity is enforced. The first criterion of the selection of content of a newspaper is its potential profitability. The information most likely to be published is that which is likely to be interesting to a wide audience, not that which is socially valuable but less likely to attract attention. Consequently the foreign-owned media tend to trivialize issues of long-term importance to Poland and highlight inconsequential issues that distract and entertain citizens.

In the political realm, the network of EU institutions is becoming an autonomous environment in which the transnational political class is formed. The administration of the

European Union consumes 6 percent of its annual budget and employs 89,000 people. In 2013 there were 32,000 administrative employees in the Directorates-General of the European Commission, one thousand in the European Parliament, and five thousand in EU agencies. The politicians from various European countries who enter the structures of European bureaucracy become members of the supranational political class. The position and chances for advancement in its hierarchy depend on how efficiently the directives coming from Brussels are realized in these politicians' countries of origin. In contrast, the national fraction of the rulers' class maximizes its influence in its national society. It is in its interest to strengthen and protect the sovereignty of the nation state.

The process of the creation of a supranational rulers' class is still *in statu nascendi* because the creation of a rulers' class presupposes, by definition, possessing the appropriate means of coercion. For the time being, the transnational class does not have such hard means of influence at its disposal. This is why it is in its interest that the new rulers come from the two strongest countries of the European Union: Germany and France, who also have the strongest military. However, these rulers will not abandon the interests of their particular countries. The end result is that they support those aspects of European integration that are profitable for their countries of origin. This is characteristic of Germany in particular. The transnational rulers' class already possesses a strong arsenal of soft coercive means, ranging from public admonitions to threats of sanctions and the withdrawal of financing for economic projects that can be used against recalcitrant national authorities, as has been the case with Hungary.

WHO STANDS TO LOSE AND WHO STANDS TO GAIN FROM THE POWER CHANGES IN POLAND?

The intensity of the political arguments concerning the Constitutional Tribunal in Poland may seem incomprehensible to those who have taken the trouble to study its history and limited importance. Over the last twenty-five years this institution has only had a

corrective function in the legislative work of the Sejm. Briefly said, the issue is power rather than the marginalization of the court.

In order to correctly assess the current political conflict in Poland, it is necessary to take a look at the nature of a political party. **The activity of each political party reflects two types of interests. The first is political in nature:** it is the maximization of power within the party. That interest is realized in the relationships between the particular components of the party's leadership (the leader plus the elite plus the party apparatus) and ordinary party members. Members of the party elite are loyal to the leader in return for expected political profits. When a party is in opposition the reward can be, for instance, being placed in an appropriate position on an electoral list (in the election to the European Parliament, the national parliament, a regional parliament, a city council, or a *gmina* council); or, after a victory in the election, being employed in the office of a parliamentary member. The loyalty of the local party apparatus to the party elite and the loyalty of ordinary party members to the local party apparatus are based on the same principle. However, the lower position in the party hierarchy the smaller the expected political profits and, therefore, the lower the loyalty of party members to their leaders. When a party wins a parliamentary election, it gains access to a new field of power regulation. The elite of the party becomes the elite of the state, which decides who will occupy a certain number of government jobs. This set of positions can always be broadened by creating new institutions or by reforming the old ones.

The second type of interest in a democratic state system is realized in the **relationship between the party and its electorate** because in order to win an election and power and to be able to put selected people in government jobs, the party must mobilize its grassroots members and gain the support of the majority or at least plurality of voters. For that purpose it must construct such a political program containing political, socioeconomic, and socio-ideological components as will mobilize party members and motivate citizens to vote for the party.

The main beneficiaries of political changes are the party elites. Even if political changes improve the functioning of the state, which translates into advantages for citizens, it is the party leadership that will be in charge of implementing the proposed changes. They will become the leaders of the state. The socioeconomic and socioideological parts of political programs are addressed to citizens, with the view of ensuring reelection.

From the point of view of non-Marxian historical materialism we can distinguish three basic varieties of party programs with respect to the economic realm and the same number with respect to the cultural realm. As regards the economy, a leftist socioeconomic program presumes increasing that part of the social income that is used for the benefit of employees, as well as strengthening employee rights in relation to their employers; a rightist program presumes deregulating the economy by lowering taxes, which is beneficial for the owners' class; and a centrist program attempts to reconcile the interests of the two classes. By analogy, from the cultural point of view we can distinguish conservative, liberal, and centrist socio-ideological programs. A conservative program allows the state to support a certain set of social ideas and functional approaches with a view to preserving society as a whole. A liberal program leaves the issue of propagating ideas and attitudes to individual citizens. A centrist one incorporates both tendencies.

Let us now consider the relationship between the maximization of political and social interests of various classes comprising the party electorate. Since voter support is necessary to gain power in a democracy, in the long run the maximization of political interest to the exclusion of voters' interest is not in the best interest of a party. If a political party which has taken over the leadership of a state begins to prioritize its influence in the state administration over the realization of the voters' interests, it will lose to the opposing political party in the nearest election. A party with a long-run perspective, including the upcoming elections, will be aware of the fact that the realization of political interests must be mitigated and social interest

must be taken into account if the party is to be successful.

Therefore **the dispute about the Constitutional Tribunal in Poland should be seen as a typical political dispute between the party that has lost the majority in the parliament and the party that has gained it** and, as a result, has the power to fill posts in the state administration. **During the eight years PO was in power, it nominated fourteen out of fifteen judges in the Constitutional Tribunal.** Before the end of the term of office of the old Sejm, on the occasion of the amendment of the Constitutional Tribunal law, an additional five judges were selected whose terms of office were to begin with the term of office of the new Sejm, i.e., in November and December, upon expiration of the term of some of the present judges. In that way, fourteen judges nominated by PO would still be members of the fifteen-person Constitutional Tribunal. The PO obviously intended to use the Constitutional Tribunal to retain political power after the anticipated electoral loss.

An amendment of the law introduced by PiS restricted the number of PO-nominated judges from fourteen to nine. The solutions suggested by PiS on that occasion were not dissimilar from the solutions adopted in other European countries. As regards the entities that nominate the judges in a constitutional tribunal, the term of office of those judges, and their competence, different solutions have been adopted in the constitutions of various European countries that have that institution (some do not). The judges of a constitutional tribunal can be nominated by the president, senate, parliament, or a self-governing council of judges. The idea of moving the Constitutional Tribunal outside of Warsaw, criticized in the mainstream media, was inspired by Germany, where the seat of the Constitutional Tribunal is in Karlsruhe.

Also, a conflict similar to the Polish one regarding the filling of three posts in a Constitutional Tribunal, which lasted about a year and a half, occurred in Italy without attracting attention from any European institution. No member of the Italian Parliament

or the European Commission demanded a debate concerning the condition of democracy in Italy, or a new election, or the monitoring of the situation in that country. Let us also remember that a country such as the United Kingdom does not have a constitution at all, yet no one accuses that monarchy of being undemocratic.

The one-sided *engagement* of foreign and national mainstream media in the dispute surrounding the Constitutional Tribunal is therefore greatly disturbing. The prime ministers of Luxemburg and Austria, president of the European Parliament Martin Schulz, and president of the liberal fraction in the European Parliament Guy Verhofstadt are on record for recommending actions against Poland that cannot be accommodated in the original plan for the European Union. The numerous demonstrations organized in Poland and abroad under the slogan “defense of democracy” and the recurring demand for preterm elections indicate that the issue is something more than an ordinary political conflict between the winning and the losing party about the filling of posts.

My thesis is that the taking over of power by PiS not only limits the scope of the political influence of the previously ruling party—which is a standard outcome of a change of power in democracies—but also threatens the interests of other social classes in Poland and abroad. The political change achieved by the PiS victory is much deeper than commonly assumed. It is not only a matter of power being taken over by a single party for the first time since 1989; this time power went from the fraction of rulers oriented toward the transnational rulers’ class to a nationally-oriented fraction of rulers who promise a significant redistribution of political power, economic profits, and intellectual influence. If we assume that the above interpretation is correct, then the answer to the question of who lost when PiS came to power is as follows.

1. The transnational fraction of the rulers’ class. The taking of power by PiS posits a threat to the scope of the regulations of the supranational rulers’ class because Poland will

not be as willing to realize the recommendations coming from Brussels as it used to be (e.g., the recommendation concerning the acceptance of refugees according to an imposed algorithm). Bearing that in mind, it is no wonder that President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz commented angrily that what has happened in Poland is a kind of a coup d’état. Such remarks are not motivated by his Polonophobia but by his interests: if PiS retains power, Poland may become less dependent on Brussels and follow the example of Hungary. It is symptomatic that the postulate of shortening the term of office of the Polish Sejm surfaced during a demonstration of the recently created “Committee for the Defense of Democracy” (Komitet Obrony Demokracji), and that it took place in the capital of Germany.

2. The transnational fraction of the owners’ class. According to the data quoted above, foreign entities have recently transferred 82 billion zloties out of the Polish economy, which amounts to 5 percent of the Polish GDP. The promised banking and supermarket taxes, as well as a restriction of VAT exemptions, will definitely restrict the profits of the supranational owners’ class.

3. The transnational fraction of the media “priests” class. The announced intention of a “repolonization” of the media and a change in the advertising policies of government institutions and agencies will limit the foreign media companies’ profits from advertising. In the years 2010–2014 the twelve Polish ministers spent about 260 million zloties on advertisements in the press, radio, television, and the Internet—twice as much as all the governments in the years 2006–2010. The following foreign companies are examples of income acquired via Polish government advertising: Axel Springer (3.2 million zloties); Verlagsgruppe Passau (2.6 million zloties); Bauer Media Polska, the owner of the RMF radio (1.9 million zloties); and the French media concern Groupe Lagardere, the owner of Radio Zet, Plus, and Antyradio (5.3 million zloties).²¹ The ministries of the Polish government have placed commercials in foreign television networks as well: in CNN (amounting to 5.6

million zloties), *France* (1.25 million zloties), *Financial Times* (568 thousand zloties), *The Economist* (410 thousand zloties), and *International Herald Tribune* (184 thousand zloties).

4. The national fractions of the classes of rulers, “priests,” and owners. I have already mentioned the political damage to the party that has lost the election. The new rulers have announced a change in the advertising policies in national media. For example, in the years 2010–2014 13.8 million zloties was spent on advertising in TVN and 8.5 million in Polsat (with comparable viewership), while the Agora Company earned 5 million zloties.²² Those amounts may now go to other media, the sympathies of which are more in line with those of the ruling party. The announcement of changes in the tax law and the intention to scrutinize the decisions about VAT exemptions, which have amounted to a budgetary loss of 52 billion zloties, or 3 percent of the GDP,²³ may limit the income of the businessmen associated with the previously ruling party.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN POLAND? AN ATTEMPT AT A PROGNOSIS

We do not know if the coming to power of PiS will change the direction of the redistribution of political power, economic profits, and intellectual influence. There are three possible scenarios that can follow.

1. A pessimistic one. The activity of PiS will be restricted to the realization of the political and socioideological components of its program. The control over government institutions, intensified by competition within the party, will lead to unrestrained replacement of “people from the previous coalition” with “our people” in an increasing number of these institutions. That will reinforce the division into “us” and “them,” leading to growing resentment by members of the losing party, their families, and their friends, which will exacerbate the state of social conflict already fueled by the *hostile* media environment. The conflict could be further aggravated by the realization of a cultural policy consisting in

“wars” on new fronts. Such a policy will result in the division of people into those who realize the flagship projects of the winning party (e.g., the Museum of Polish History or the Museum of the “Cursed Soldiers” in Ostrołęka) and those who will not be able to receive adequate support because they are not associated with the current ruling class.

2. A realistic one. Having established control over some government institutions and agencies, PiS will realize those elements of the socio-economic program that will ensure the support of the key electorate (e.g., the newly passed bill of 500 zloties a month for the second child and further children tax-free). The party will also try to find a *modus vivendi* with regard to some in the leftist-liberal environment, contributing to its neutralization.

3. An optimistic one. Having established control over selected state institutions and agencies, PiS will put into practice the social elements of its socioeconomic program and will introduce changes in the industry to make economic development more dynamic, stimulating the creation of new technologies and workplaces. The restoration of economic independence will require cooperation with academics and gaining the favor, or at least indifference of some leftist-liberal intellectual and artistic circles.

The realization of the first scenario will lead to an electoral failure in the 2019 election. The realization of the second scenario will ensure a majority in the parliament, making it possible to continue governing. The realization of the third scenario will allow the party to gain a majority, which will make it possible to change the constitution.

At present, PiS is at the stage of implementing its political interests and taking control over the state institutions. The mistakes its inexperienced ministers make (e.g., Minister Waszczykowski’s unfortunate phrasing in an interview with a German paper), repeated by the hostile media, unnecessarily antagonize groups of voters. If these are only due to a lack of experience, there is a chance that they will be eliminated.

However, the situation will be worse if they are manifestations of a competition for political influence and posts in which PiS politicians play up to the expectations of their electorates without regard for the party's reputation and for Poland's interests.

We can be sure of one thing. The reconstruction of the Polish political scene is a symptom of the diminishing development potential of the transformation that has taken place since 1989. The welfare state that has been maintained functioned only for the ruling classes. As regards the masses, the state only performed the function of a guard protecting the privileges of the oligarchy. The masses now demand change. The parties and intellectual circles that will correctly diagnose Poland's economic, political, and cultural problems and propose viable solutions stand to gain in the Polish political scene. Δ

NOTES

¹ One proof of that is what Witold Waszczykowski, the foreign minister of the new government, has said: "It is our only wish to cure our country of a few diseases so that it can recover. The previous government engaged [the media] in the realization of a specific concept of leftist politics, as if the world had to move according to the Marxist pattern, in one direction only: that of a new mixture of cultures and races, a world consisting of cyclists and vegetarians who only use renewable energy sources and who oppose any expression of religion. That has nothing to do with the traditional Polish values." Ł. Warzecha, "Waszczykowski trafia w dziesiątkę czyli o weganach i rowerzystach," in: wpolityce.pl <<http://wPolityce.pl/polityka/277078-waszczykowski-trafia-w-dziesiatke-czyli-o-weganach-i-rowerzystach>>, accessed 5 January 2016. However, both that statement and the supportive journalist's comment tell us nothing about the economic reasons for voting for PiS, which were highlighted in the political program of the party and presented during the election campaign. As a follower of the campaign, I do not recall any promises made by the party to challenge Polish culinary traditions or to destroy bicycle paths.

² L. Nowak, *U podstaw teorii socjalizmu*, vol. 1: *Własność i władza*. Poznań: Nakom, 1991, pp. 167–182.

³ This topic has been elaborated on in K. Brzechczyn, "Upadek realnego socjalizmu w Europie Wschodniej a załamanie się hiszpańskiego imperium kolonialnego w Ameryce Łacińskiej. Próba analizy porównawczej," in: K. Brzechczyn, editor, *Ścieżki transformacji. Ujęcia teoretyczne i opisy empiryczne*. Poznań: Zysk i Ska, 2003; and "Dziedzictwo Solidarności a przebieg transformacji ustrojowej w Polsce," in: J. R. Sielezin, M. Golińczak, editors, *Solidarność i opozycja polityczna w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w latach 80. XX wieku*. Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2012, pp. 217–240.

⁴ K. Brzechczyn, "O ewolucji społeczeństw socjalistycznych. Próba wstępnej konceptualizacji," in: T. Grabińska, M. Zabierowski, editors, *Analizy metodologiczne w nauce*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej, 1997, pp. 105–121; K. Brzechczyn, *Kłopoty z Polską. Wybór publicystyki politycznej*. Poznań: WiS, 1998; K. Brzechczyn, "Kompromis przy Okrągłym Stole. Próba modelu," in: K. Brzechczyn, editor, *Interpretacje upadku komunizmu w Polsce i w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*. Poznań: IPN, 2011, pp. 87–107.

⁵ P. Strzałkowski, "Polityczne i społeczne uwarunkowania przedsiębiorczości ekonomicznej," in: W. W. Morawski, editor, *Zmierzch socjalizmu państwowego*. Warsaw: PWN, 1994, p. 349.

⁶ T. Kowalik, "Polska transformacja," <www.polskatransformacja.pl>, Warsaw: Muza, 2009, p. 152.

⁷ Ibid., p. 168.

⁸ Ibid., p. 104.

⁹ K. Poznański, *Wielki przekręt. Klęska polskich reform*. Warsaw: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze i Literackie, 2000, pp. 40–41.

¹⁰ M. Malinowski, "Odzyskać państwo," *Nowy Obywatel. Pismo na Rzecz Sprawiedliwości Społecznej*, no. 17 (68), 2005, p. 17.

¹¹ T. Kowalik, op. cit., p. 153.

¹² I quote the data from A. Szahaj's work, *Inny kapitalizm jest możliwy*. Warsaw: Książka i Prasa, 2015, pp. 67, 127–133.

¹³ M. Malinowski, *Odzyskać państwo*, p. 17.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ M. Malinowski, *Odzyskać państwo*, p. 17.

¹⁶ B. Radziejowski, "Renta neokolonialna, czyli ile jeszcze Polak zapłaci," *Nowa Konfederacja. Internetowy Miesięcznik Idei*, no. 2 (53), 2014, p. 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 4; also "Koszmary rachunek za bezmyślną prywatyzację. Z prof. Jerzym Żyżyńskim rozmawia Aleksandra Rybińska," *Nowa Konfederacja*, no. 2 (53), 2014, p. 3.

¹⁸ B. Radziejowski, "Renta neokolonialna," p. 3.

¹⁹ I rely on K. Niedźwiadek's "Struktura i rozwój momentu produkcji duchowej," in: P. Buczkowski and A. Klawiter, editors, *Klasy – światopogląd – idealizacja*, Poznań: PWN, 1985, pp. 17–46.

²⁰ P. Grzegorzczak, *Czy musimy repolonizować media? Analiza zagranicznego kapitału w mediach*, in: Jagielloński24.pl

<<http://Jagielloński24.pl/2015/09/14/czy-musimy-repolonizowac-media-analiza-zagranicznego-kapitalu-w-polsce>>, accessed 5 January 2015.

²¹ P. Grzegorzczak, *Media na państwowym garnuszku. Analiza wydatków instytucji publicznych na reklamy*, in: jagielloński24.pl

<<http://Jagielloński24.pl/2015/12/01/media-na-panstwowym-garnuszku-analiza-wydatkow-instytucji-publicznych-na-reklamy>>, accessed 5 January 2016.

²² P. Grzegorzczak, *Media na państwowym garnuszku*.

²³ Z. Kuźmiuk, "Sejmowa komisja śledcza w sprawie wyludzeń VAT?" In: wpolityce.pl

<http://wpolityce.pl/gospodarka/276932-sejmowa-komisja-sledcza-w-sprawie-wyludzen-vat-ustalilaby-w-jaki-sposob-i-za-czym-przyzwoleniem-dochodzilo-do-rozszczelnienia-przepisow-dotyczacych-podatku-vat-i-kto-na-tych-rozwiazaniach-zyskiwal>, accessed 5 January 2016. According to the Global Financial Integrity report, "foreign companies illegally siphon about 90 billion zloties a year out of Poland, i.e. 5 percent of our GDP, mainly by way of frauds concerning VAT, CIT, and customs." Quoted from Z. Kuźmiuk, "Polska wśród 20 najbardziej 'okradanych' państw świata," in: wpolityce.pl <http://wpolityce.pl/gospodarka/276449-polska-wsrod-20-najbardziej-okradanych-panstw-swiata>>, accessed 5 January 2016.

The First World War Writer as Dictator in Zakopane

Rafał Malczewski

Translated by Adrian Lukas Smith

At the end of October 1918, after four years of war, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy collapsed. The army from the front changed into a horde of displaced persons wanting to return home as quickly as possible. The legal authorities perished into ash, blasted away by a hurricane of

enjoyment and rebellion blowing through the constituent countries of the Austro-Hungarian empire and nations of the dying Holy Roman Empire. It acted from Trieste to Suczawa, from Bregenz to Dolna Watra. Galicia and Lodomeria and the principalities of Oświęcim, Zator, and Kraków resisted being taken over. The coup occurred quickly and almost without pain. Authority was grasped by people who were more clever and more experienced in underground work. Secret organizations appeared. There were new faces and new heroes, as well as demonstrations, oaths, rallies, outbursts of patriotism, garrulousness, and improvisation. New homelands were born, former officers of the monarchy stepped down quietly and silently; they were disheartened because of the coup's lack of order, the unjust contempt for bureaucracy. Amateurs grasped governance. Young people persuaded the army to give up their weapons because the army was tired and had been waiting for this for a long time. Hearts rose. New countries began on their journey to the unknown in this intoxicated, anarchic world.

Zakopane entered this new epoch beautifully. The people proclaimed: we no longer have an Austrian monarchy! The power of governance was deposited in the hands of a writer. It was not offered to Piłsudski's Legion or to professional Sokół patriots, or to a lawyer or doctor, but to the writer Stefan Żeromski. I am not sure whether this action came from the ghosts of the dying epoch or whether it initiated new times. We know how writers gradually lose their importance. At that time, despite its beautiful blushes, Europe fell ill. Power was lost and law and freedom were scorned, people became delusionary and began to believe in superstitions and gods, dark and bloodthirsty. As usual, Zakopane survived unscathed from the Great War to the time of the cable car to Kasprowy. At the beginning of 1915, Russian patrols came to the foot of the Gorce hills. The *Russkies* lasted on this line until May 1915 when the German offensive pushed them hundreds of kilometers to the east.

Out of spite for Zakopane, the First World War broke out in the summer season. It was a blow to