

## POLAND 2002: THE TRIALS OF ANDRZEJ LEPPER

### INTRODUCTION

The Polish political establishment received a shock in the September 2001 parliamentary election when the radical agrarian union known as Samoobrona (Self-Defence) came third in the poll. Self-Defence's better-than-expected showing was all the more stunning because the party had received meagre (and overwhelmingly hostile) coverage from the media in the pre-election period. Political pundits had also written off Self-Defence as unlikely to gain sufficient votes to enter parliament.

Compared to the glitzy, high-profile campaigns of the main parties – the former Communist, Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD)-Union of Labour (UP) coalition and the “centrist” Citizens' Platform (PO) - Self-Defence's campaign was virtually invisible. Its leader, Andrzej Lepper toured Poland in a small car, while the Freedom Union party (UW), for example, travelled around in large, plush “Freedom Union” campaign buses. Yet, UW failed to surmount the 5% threshold for entry into the Polish parliament (the *Sejm*) while Samoobrona garnered 10% of the vote. The other major shock of the 2001 election was the annihilation of the Solidarity movement's political entity, AWS, which had governed Poland since 1997. [see BHRG **Poland 2001: the Tiger Stumbles** [www.bhrg.org](http://www.bhrg.org). for the background to and conduct of the Polish election]

The Freedom Union a centrist, free market entity was replaced in its voters' affections by a virtual clone. The Citizens' Platform (PO) had only appeared as a political movement in January 2001 but it managed to steal the Freedom Union's voters (and clothes) while still only gaining 1% more of the vote than Samoobrona which ended up with 53 seats in the *Sejm* and 2 in the Senate. However, there was a strong sense among many ordinary Poles that, had the electoral playing field been even - both from a media and financial perspective – Lepper's party might have done even better.

Although Self-Defence's 53 seats out of a total of 460 in the *Sejm* did not appear likely to pose any threat to the new ruling SLD-UP coalition, Lepper was made a vice marshal (Deputy Speaker) of the *Sejm*. It looked initially as if this might be a reward for his endorsement of the SLD-UP budget, and perhaps other, less visible forms of cooperation but there was also a feeling that his nuisance value could be neutralized if he were treated as something of an 'insider'.

Soon afterwards, however, serious rifts began to appear in Self-Defence's relationship with the government and the parties of the establishment. This development culminated in the removal of Mr. Lepper from the post of *Sejm* Deputy Speaker on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2001 after what were deemed to be a number of provocative incidents, including publicly condemning the planned closure of an open-air market. During his impeachment proceedings, Mr. Lepper made a speech in the *Sejm* in which he alleged in great detail – citing dates, times, places and sums – specific instances of corruption among Poland's most prominent political figures (a translation of this speech appears in the Appendix to this report). The *Sejm* reportedly begin deliberating whether to strip Mr. Lepper of his parliamentary immunity thus opening the way for him to be charged with slander – a criminal offence – probably on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2001.

BHRG sent two representatives to Poland in January 2002 to investigate the issues surrounding Andrzej Lepper's dismissal as Deputy Speaker of parliament and possible prosecution for slander. They interviewed Mr. Lepper himself as well as other politicians and journalists about the present situation.

### ANDRZEJ LEPPER AND SELF-DEFENCE

#### Party Issues

Although Mr. Lepper has only become a household name in Poland in the last couple of years, he has been active in the farmers' trade union movement for the past decade. In

recent years he has organized farmers into huge demonstrations, sometimes numbering in the tens of thousands. In April, Self-Defence will hold a congress commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its registration as a trade union.

The impression that Self-Defence is a “one-issue” party only concerned with the interests of Polish farmers is not strictly accurate. Mr. Lepper has campaigned loudly against the selling off at bargain basement prices of Poland’s national resources and advocated increased rights for Poland’s industrial workers. On 7<sup>th</sup> January 2002 he appeared at a workers’ rally at the Daewoo plant in Lublin (South Korea’s Daewoo automotive company was recently bought up by General Motors), urging the workers to organize to defend their rights as 3,000 Daewoo workers in Lublin have received neither overdue wages nor lay-off pay.

Lepper has also advocated the diversification of Poland’s sources of natural gas. Witold Michalowski, a member of Self-Defence and editor of *Pipeline* magazine, told BHHRG that as matters stood Poland was committed to obtaining natural gas exclusively from a pipeline running from Russia through Poland to the West. Self-Defence, he said, wanted to ensure that natural gas would also be available to Poland from other such sources, such as Norway, but that the deal negotiated between President Aleksander Kwasniewski and Moscow precluded that option. Mr. Michalowski, an engineer by training, also said that Poland desperately needed liquid natural gas (LNG) storage facilities on its territory which would be more economical than dependence on foreigners.

On foreign policy, Self-Defence advocates a greater equilibrium in Poland’s relations with East and West. Apart from opposing Poland’s accession to the European Union under current terms, Self-Defence views Poland’s subservience to international financial institutions, such as the IMF and World Bank, as destructive. Mr. Lepper has described Poland’s central bank – governed by a separate organ called the Monetary Policy Council (MPC) – as simply the Polish branch of the World Bank. He has joined the present SLD-UP government in opposing the MPC’s refusal to lower Poland’s prohibitively high interest rates which keep up the value of the zloty making imports cheap and local investment expensive.

### **The Impeachment Speech and Allegations of Corruption**

Lepper delivered a damning speech to the Sejm during the hearings over his dismissal as Deputy Speaker during which he accused several leading Polish politicians of , among other things, bribe taking. The speech immediately prompted denials and recrimination from members of the political elite who accused Lepper of fabricating evidence against them. However, in an interview conducted with BHHRG in January 2002 in Warsaw, Lepper claimed that his speech merely publicized material contained in documents to which he had access as vice speaker of the *Sejm*.

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, in the city of Olsztyn, the Polish PAP news agency reported that the police had apprehended Bogdan Gasinski whom Mr. Lepper named as his “informer” in the corruption allegations scandal. According to the report, the police had a warrant to arrest Mr. Gasinski for failing to show up for trial on charges of “swindling 36,000 zlotys (about \$9,000) out of the Inter Commerce company and stealing 369,000 zlotys worth of its property, as well as swindling 10,000 zlotys out of private citizens.”

Interestingly, Mr. Lepper had already accused the head of Inter Commerce, Mr. Rudolf Skowronski, of – among other things – doing business with the al-Qaeda terrorist network in Afghanistan. Lepper alleged to BHHRG that Mr. Skowronski and a senator from the Citizens’ Platform, Robert Smoktunowicz, had been trading in precious stones from Afghanistan, but that they had initially denied ever visiting the war-torn country. According to Lepper, both Mr. Skowronski and Senator Smoktunowicz admitted visiting Afghanistan but said they had only ever been in the northern areas controlled by the late leader of the Northern Alliance, Ahmad Shah Massoud. Mr. Lepper concluded that this was unlikely, since the mines for the particular type of stones being bought and sold by Skowronski and Smoktunowicz were located exclusively in the southern areas of Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban and al-Qaeda. He believed it possible that the two men had personal contact with the al-Qaeda “leader” himself.

Armed with this information and what he claimed to be other details of past Afghan activity in Poland, Lepper asked to see US ambassador, Christopher Hill, to present him with evidence supporting these allegations. Hill refused to see him.

In light of the accusation against Mr. Skowronski, the fingering of Gasinski – a man charged with theft from one of Mr. Skowronski's companies – as Mr. Lepper's "informer" may itself have been a fabrication designed to discredit the Self-Defence leader. Lepper had, after all, also accused ex-Warsaw mayor Pawel Piskorski – now an MP and leader of the Citizens' Platform – of having unjustly awarded all tenders for the construction of hypermarkets (gigantic, foreign-owned complexes of supermarkets and other shops that have bankrupted many smaller businesses) in the capital to none other than Rudolf Skowronski.

Whatever the truth of any or all these allegations, it is striking that they have received little or no detailed media coverage.

### **Conspiracy Theories?**

Although it is a relatively large party by virtue of the 53 seats it holds in the Sejm, Self Defence - apart from its leader, Andrzej Lepper - is largely ignored by the Polish and foreign media. When other members of Self-Defence are quoted in the news, their names are almost never given. Mr. Lepper attributed this to a "media conspiracy."

While suggestions of conspiracy in politics are typically labelled the ramblings of crackpots, especially in the West, in the case of Poland even politicians identified with the establishment have admitted the one-sidedness of their country's media. In August 2001, BHHRG met with one of the leaders of the UP, Alexander Malachowski, who said, "there is no free press in Poland" because "it is all obedient to political parties." He described one national newspaper, *Rzeczpospolita*, as "a Norwegian" publication that "did not even represent Polish interests," and criticized Poland's most widely circulated daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, as a "liberal newspaper" that served "pro-Western" interests". Mr. Malachowski appeared to be implying that no major newspaper or media outlet in Poland served as a voice for ordinary people, but stopped short of criticizing his party's government coalition partner, SLD, for the situation.

Senator Zbigniew Romaszewski, a Solidarity veteran re-elected to the Senate from the Senat Blok 2001 movement, told BHHRG that public media were "entirely controlled by the SLD and its affiliates," and were therefore "cells of propaganda." The contrast between public and private media, said Romaszewski, was illusory because SLD controlled so much of the private media while the rest was "controlled either by Western companies or by SLD." The process of propaganda was visible in Mr. Lepper's case, claimed Romaszewski, because "Lepper seems ridiculous." In other words, Romaszewski concurred, to some extent, with Mr. Lepper's explanation.

Mr. Lepper claimed that since the September election the media was engaging in a "conspiracy of silence" towards Self-Defence. Media oligarchs, he said, hoped that "by ignoring us they will make us go away." But he said the media falsehoods were easily detectable in the inconsistent way in which the media had covered Self-Defence in a short, two month period following the election. According to Lepper, the media began by labelling Self-Defence as a group of "petty swindlers and paupers," then they were called "criminals," and now they are identified as "millionaires" and the "wealthiest party in the parliament."

The Self-Defence leader alleged that the most hostile media outlet is the newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, whose editor-in-chief is the respected former dissident, Adam Michnik. The hostility had now mushroomed to the point that political parties of every orientation had decided to oppose Self-Defence. Lepper identified the leader of the movement against him as the Polish President, Aleksander Kwasniewski, a man who had resigned his membership and leadership of the SLD so as to place himself above politics. It is worth quoting in full the following item from the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2001 edition of Radio Free Europe's Newline to appreciate the hollowness of this commitment:

## **POLISH RADICAL AGRARIANS WARN AGAINST 'SOCIAL EXPLOSION.'**

The parliamentary caucus of the Self-Defense radical farmers union has sent a letter to President Aleksander Kwasniewski, saying that the creation of an alliance against Self-Defense would only add to spreading corruption and poverty in Poland, and could also provoke an "uncontrollable social explosion," PAP reported on 6 December. The letter was a response to Kwasniewski's appeal to Self-Defense to break with its firebrand populist leader Andrzej Lepper's policies, and to Kwasniewski's threat to form an anti-Self-Defense coalition if the union fails to improve its behavior. Prosecutors are currently investigating Lepper's allegations of corruption with regard to five prominent politicians. Justice Minister and Prosecutor-General Barbara Piwnik said she will submit the motion to the Sejm to lift Lepper's parliamentary immunity if the prosecutors conclude that his allegations were slanderous.

The political elite (including the respected elderly Pole, Jan Nowak-Jezioranski, former director of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe) have regularly described Mr. Lepper as "dangerous to democracy," with some even comparing him (inevitably) to Adolf Hitler. He maintained that the elite's closing of ranks was motivated by genuine fear of Self-Defence's popularity, a fear that had prompted Polish First Lady Jolanta Kwasniewska to begin campaigning for the presidency "four years early."

BHHRG representatives themselves have been taken aback by the hostility shown towards Andrzej Lepper by educated Poles and others who take a close interest in the country. Such people regularly criticize the leader of Samoobrona in terms they would never have used to describe the former Communist rulers of Poland. Accepted democratic norms like freedom of speech and the need to, at the very least, tolerate political parties that are deemed distasteful, but in no way unlawful, are swept aside by such people. Nor does it occur to them that in the apparent free-for-all that constitutes Poland's defamation laws, Lepper himself could reasonably claim to have been slandered by being compared with Hitler and regularly labelled an "idiot" (see Adam Michnik's interview later in this report) and buffoon.

### **Criminal Charges Against Andrzej Lepper**

Andrzej Lepper now faces possible trial for slandering Foreign Minister, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Defence Minister, Jerzy Szmajdzinski and several other top politicians. On 26<sup>th</sup> November he called Cimoszewicz "a scoundrel" for suggesting that Polish farmland might be sold to foreigners within 3 years of Poland's accession to the EU. Poland has been pressing for a 12 year ban. This is not the first time Lepper has been charged with slander. In May 2001 he was sentenced to sixteen months in prison (which he is in the process of appealing) for calling ex-Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz – now head of the MPC – a "bandit" and "scumbag" and President Kwasniewski a "layabout". He has often used terms such as "stinkers" and "layabouts" in reference to Polish leaders, and while such language may only give rise to a civil action in Britain and the US, slander in Poland (like many other Continental countries) can, in certain circumstances, be a criminal offence carrying a possible prison sentence. Mr. Lepper said he would not hesitate to repeat the charge of "scumbag" made against Mr. Cimoszewicz, despite the unpleasant consequences that could be in store for him.

Self-Defense member Roza Zarska, a lawyer and member of Poland's Constitutional Tribunal, told BHHRG that Mr. Lepper might go on trial in Gdansk in a matter of weeks. The Sejm will reportedly debate stripping him of his parliamentary immunity on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Zarska informed BHHRG that lifting a Sejm member's parliamentary immunity was not provided for in the Polish Constitution under such circumstances. It is also interesting to point out that had Lepper made such allegations in the British parliament he would be protected by the defence of absolute privilege.

## THE LEAGUE OF POLISH FAMILIES

BHHRG interviewed Jan Lopuzzkanski, leader of the League of Polish Families (LPR) which won 34 seats in the September 2001 election. LPR is another of the Eurosceptic parties whose success in the election caused President Kwasniewski to offer apologies on behalf of Poland to Brussels. LPR has called for a referendum on Poland's accession to the EU, and apparently owes its success to public discontent with certain EU policies, including Brussels' opposition to legal restrictions on abortion rights in member states and its demands that Poland keep its eastern borders closed to trade while importing EU surplus at the expense of Polish production. Mr. Lopuzzkanski told BHHRG that his party differed with Self-Defense on certain issues – such as the SLD-UP budget – but found room for cooperation in many areas, particularly Poland's stance toward the EU. The LPR has a strongly clerical streak to it, and has been associated with controversial Catholic radio station *Radio Maryja* which is based in Torun.

According to Mr. Lopuzzkanski the party does not consider itself explicitly Catholic although BHHRG met voters in September 2001 who said that their priest had advised his congregation to vote for the party. Oddly, Mr. Lopuzzkanski did not attach much importance to the fact that, although the LPR's support apparently came largely from traditionally Catholic elements, the majority of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Poland appeared to favour EU accession. The opinions of "individual bishops," he said, did not necessarily represent the views of Polish Catholicism as a whole. He cited the Pope's assertion in a recent meeting in Rome with Poland's Ambassador to the Vatican – ex-Premier Hanna Suchocka – that Poland needed "to exist in European structures as a state with its own spirit, culture and physiognomy."

However, Lopuzzkanski complained that Polish media never quoted this part of the Pope's speech, referring only to the Pope's statement that the Church wanted to be present in the process of preparing Poland for EU membership and that Poland should take a proper place in European structures. He also criticized the German President, Johannes Rau, for telling a gathering of several Polish bishops in Gniezno a year and a half ago that Europe no longer needed the moral umbrella of the church as Europeans now had "new values" (i.e., European values) on which to build their lives. It was a big "faux pas," said Mr. Lopuzzkanski, to say this in front of the bishops.

Lopuzzkanski said he could not comment on whether Mr. Lepper's corruption allegations were true or not, adding that the matter was now in the hands of the judiciary. However, he did suggest that "the important thing is that people believe him." He said that Lepper was a "very dangerous man in this situation," but that the affair had "nothing to do with me." He described the accusations as "very specific and close to real people," but, while admitting that he [Lopuzzkanski] knew "about a lot of bad things" people had done, he had "never spoken it from the tribune" because "this isn't the place for me." "Now I must be trustworthy and reliable," he said.

Asked from where he thought Lepper might have obtained the information, Lopuzzkanski speculated that perhaps it came from the former security services. "In Socialist countries, the special services were very great," he said. "It is not possible to say whether these forces have a greater presence in SLD or Samoobrona or the League, but we hope that the League is clean." Commenting that "to be a former secret service collaborator is a very bad thing and a social anathema for us," Lopuzzkanski alleged that, "SLD members speak openly about having been in the secret services in Soviet times," and that "only the youngest people are trustworthy in the sense that they could not have been agents."

Mr. Lopuzzkanski's attitude can only be described as curiously timid, especially in light of the fact that LPR occupies the fewest number of seats in parliament and could presumably benefit from showing greater solidarity – if not a united front – with Lepper and Self-Defence. Unlike LPR, Lepper has expressed loud indignation about attempts to "buy" him. But then perhaps – where the LPR is concerned – the political elite sees no need to try.

It may not be entirely fanciful to speculate on the origins of LPR itself. Perhaps the Catholic hierarchy in Poland helped establish the party before the 2001 elections in order to draw voters away from Self Defence? While observing the poll in September 2001, BHHRG learned that local priests were advising their congregations (with some success) to vote for the LPR whose election platform was strikingly similar to Samoobronas - with a few added bromides for the faithful - attacking abortion. It seems evident that without the LPR Lepper's share of the vote would have been even larger.

### **ADAM MICHNIK AND GAZETA WYBORCZA**

BHHRG spoke with one of the most influential men in Poland, *Gazeta Wyborcza* Editor-in-Chief Adam Michnik. Mr. Michnik is famous not only for having been a dissident during the Communist era, but for establishing and organizing the Committee for the Protection of the Workers (KOR) in the late 1970s. *Gazeta Wyborcza* began as an underground publication and is now the biggest, most widely circulated daily paper in the country.

A model success story of post-Communist entrepreneurship, Mr. Michnik's paper is only one of the many media outlets of Poland's media giant Agora S.A., a corporate umbrella group that controls 13 local radio stations, one national radio station, and an Internet division. In 1999, *Gazeta Wyborcza* took over 23% of local advertising and 62% of all national advertising in the country. The newspaper's offices are located on the third floor of a building with heavy security in the southern part of central Warsaw. As of November 2000, its daily circulation was 560,000.

Mr. Michnik dismissed parties such as Self-Defense and LPR as unexceptional, saying such forces existed in every country. He gave as examples Britain's Conservative Party(!), the National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, and Joerg Haider's Freedom Party in Austria. He described Andrzej Lepper as an "exceptionally destructive idiot" who represented a class of people in Poland that had borrowed money several years ago and now did not want to pay it back. He said it was important to keep an eye on politicians like Lepper, since even Hitler was not taken seriously at first. But he said he thought Mr. Lepper - a self-described "man of the left" - would probably end up like Sir Oswald Mosley, the World War II leader of the British Union of Fascists (BUF) and the last person to be imprisoned in the Tower of London. It seems that Mr. Michnik failed to add that, unlike Lepper, Mosley was a fervent advocate of European integration throughout the post-war period until his death 20 years ago. Michnik also likened the Self-Defence leader to the Reform Party candidate in the 2000 US presidential election, Pat Buchanan. Mr. Lepper was certainly "not popular," according to Mr. Michnik, who said Self-Defense represented "narrow circles of the population" not exceeding 10%.

When asked which Polish parties he supported, Mr. Michnik said that he would always be a "Freedom Union man." The Freedom Union failed to surmount the 5% threshold necessary to enter parliament in the last election and currently enjoys perhaps as little as 2% popularity in Poland as a whole. The Freedom Union's most famous 'offspring' is Monetary Policy Council (MPC) chief Leszek Balcerowicz, who is responsible for regulating the country's central bank. Concerning the opposition of Mr. Lepper (and the SLD-UP government) to the MPC's refusal to lower exorbitant interest rates, Michnik said Lepper would "wring his own neck," and that "only an Argentine crisis could lift him to prominence." The opinion of the majority of Poles on the subject seemed not to interest Mr. Michnik.

A fervent proponent himself of Poland's speedy accession to the EU, Adam Michnik views all forces opposed to or critical of the process as threatening to ruin Poland's "historic chance." He discounts concerns over the questionable democratic credentials of EU political structures saying that "the right time to discuss the level of democracy in the EU is when Poland joins," he says. "A person who complains about EU democracy is like someone standing on a train platform complaining about the condition of the train, but if he doesn't get on the train he will never go anywhere." In a continent where, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many people have at times boarded trains and been taken by force to places from which they never returned, this seems a very cynical metaphor indeed.

## CONCLUSION

In the years since the country left the Warsaw Pact over a decade ago, control of Poland's government has switched back and forth between Solidarity ex-dissidents and ex-Communists. But Polish domestic and foreign policy has remained remarkably uniform during this time, so much so that it has seemed as if no meaningful choice existed. Only with the last election, when parties such as the left-wing Self-Defence and the right-wing League of Polish Families entered the parliament in significant – albeit still relatively small – numbers, did there appear to be some sort of alternative to the unconditionally pro-Western, pro-free-market stance of post-Cold War Poland. Self-Defence and LPR both advocate greater equilibrium in Poland's relations between East and West, but the political establishment has simply labelled the new parties a “threat to democracy” for taking this position – an odd approach for a country whose elite evidently prides itself on the degree of political pluralism it has achieved in the last ten years.

Clearly the tide of history would appear to place the likes of SLD, Citizens' Platform, and even the Freedom Union on the winning side. Yet even talking with young urban Poles who live reasonably well in comparison to most of their fellow countrymen, BHHRG learned that concerns about the country's future were not confined to the rural and working class poor in the Poland of the New World Order.

One 21-year-old journalism student said she believed that Adam Michnik – who enjoys legendary status in the West as an ex-dissident and liberal intellectual – was deeply resented by many Poles for having initiated the “thick line” policy some years ago. The “thick line” policy entailed drawing the line between Poland's past and future thick enough to include in the present “legitimate” political life of the country many figures associated closely with the Communist and secret police past. Perhaps partially as a result of this policy, cynicism towards the political class today among Poles is higher, many say, than in Communist times.

Another young woman said her parents had established a small private trading company more than ten years ago, but that their business had fallen on very hard times thanks to the invasion of foreign hypermarkets that had forced smaller operations to collapse. She also said that not everything the West offered Poland was necessarily worth embracing. During several months studying in England, she noticed that among natives most children did not have close relationships with their parents, but that this was apparently the norm.

As Mr. Lepper prepares to go on trial for slander, the West is likely to turn a blind eye to his fate. His lawyer told BHHRG that in the past a representative of an international human rights organization had initially monitored court proceedings but suddenly quit without explanation. Perhaps Mr. Lepper's views do not accord with official “international human rights ideology,” making the Self-Defence leader's rights “less equal” than others'.

It is worth recalling that the West attacked Zimbabwe for prosecuting opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai for slander even though he was publicly advocating the violent overthrow of the government. But there is silence when someone like Lepper is regularly *prosecuted* not sued for what amounts to puerile insults. Also, politicians like Kwasniewski and Cimoszewicz would have no recourse to the laws of libel in the United States where public figures are regarded as having adequate means to defend themselves. This is overwhelmingly the case in Poland where *all* the public media is hostile to Andrzej Lepper.

Critics, with some justification, retort that Lepper “invites trouble” by his outrageous behaviour. However, as one astute Pole pointed out to BHHRG, this is the only way he can get any attention from the country's media. The farmers' leader seems determined to continue with his confrontational stand against the authorities, possibly banking on mass support if he was to be locked up for any period of time. But as this organization has regularly noted, the general public, disappointed, destitute and leaderless in the post-Communist world, is unlikely to rise up against anything. Their most energetic response to their situation is to pack their bags and go – to Western Europe, the US, anywhere they can find work, however menial. In this situation it will be all too easy for the Polish authorities to lock up the likes of Mr. Lepper ...and throw away the key.

**APPENDIX: SPEECH BY ANDRZEJ LEPPER IN THE SEJM  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS IMPEACHMENT AS VICE MARSHAL,**

**29<sup>th</sup> November 2001**

Fortunately, the Polish Constitutional Tribunal recently reconfirmed that parliamentary immunity cannot be used as a shield against legal trials. That is good. You are looking for criminals in Samoobrona (Self-Defence), and we are going to find them amongst you. [...]

Would the honourable *'poseł'* (MP), Mr. Piskorski, tell us whether it is true that he met four times with a 'Mr S.' in the Hotel Victoria? It was on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1998... when he gave you \$50,000... The second time you met him on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1999, when he gave you \$120,000. The third time was 23<sup>rd</sup> October – \$110,000 – and the fourth, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2000 – \$150,000.

And Mr Olechowski, would you confirm for me that on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2000, at 6 p.m. in the Gessler Café, you received \$2 million for your presidential campaign? Well, you don't need public money for your campaign, for your party – you need nothing at all. Why would you? These billboards are a gift from heaven for you, aren't they? [...]

Is it also true (I might ask the Chief Prosecutor) that [Foreign] Minister Cimoszewicz on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2001 in the Hotel Victoria – I know what I am saying; of course you will beat me up and find some compliant judges, but before that, listen – received \$120,000? Next, it was [Defence] Minister Szmajdziński – do you remember Mr. Carrington? – who took \$50,000. I ask you: was it the way I'm describing it? I am going to submit the relevant documents to the court, and then we shall see what happens next...

Perhaps you gentlemen – Mr. Szmajdziński, Mr. Tusk, Mr. Cimoszewicz – should go together to Wrocław and see a match of [Polish football team] Śląsk Wrocław. It was there, in the Hotel Wrocław on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2001, between 9 and 9:30 a.m., that one of you – you do not know which one, so talk to each other; I am not affirming anything, I say 'allegedly' – received \$350,000 from some 'Mr S.' Well, Mr. Tusk, and what about the case of your meeting with the sadly deceased "Pershing" [one of the bosses of the Polish Mafia] on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1998, when he allegedly lent you 300,000 zlotys? You will answer that this is all untruth, but there are relevant documents, which are kept in proper places, and regardless of what happens to me – I have had several threats already – these documents will be revealed.

You have to understand me, my heart is on the left side, and you gentlemen of SLD think carefully whether your leaders have hearts or just large tins on the left side... Think it over, for you might not be here in four years or perhaps even earlier... if you do not implement a humane and pro-social policy...

And now, of course, our heroes – the Citizens' Platform – there are no better champions in destroying the country than these gentlemen here... But you are not afraid of what I am saying now, you are afraid of me and of Samoobrona (Self-Defence), and that is the truth.

And you, Union of Labour [Unia Pracy], you are decent people, you have always been on the side of the workers, and even you do not like what I have just said... You, Mr Lisak... but no, I shan't say any more...

And, obviously, Law and Justice (PiS) – the national dignity... that is truly laughable. What are you talking about? About dignity, about respect and security of national resources, about the dignity of people... Yes, gentlemen, national dignity is also the dignity of the people... and you

are talking about this dignity. And according to you, Lepper has blasphemed, demeaned the Sejm... Yes, because he demands some respect for the impoverished nation, whether he is a Chairman or not, whether he is an MP or not... And you, Mr Kaczynski, you should speak for yourself, because when you speak it is as if you were speaking for two people...

And you, my colleagues from PSL (Peasants' Party), you are probably the least to blame. I thought you had more sins on your conscience, though that doesn't mean you are completely blameless. I don't need your votes, because you will either behave in a cowardly way and refrain from voting or you will vote just like the SLD. It is characteristic of you, and I'm used to it by now.

Fortunately, in this Parliament there are national forces, such as the League of Polish Families [LPR] and Samoobrona. I shall speak truths from here for which you will have to answer. It is all being recorded, and it will be broadcast in all provinces of Poland.

It was you, in your suits and ties, with the scent of Dior and Channel perfumes, who caressed each other for the last 12 years. And so you have caressed each other right up to today, when there is a complete disintegration of heavy industry and agriculture, of small commerce, trade and services. You have let Poland become a recipient of the Western trade surplus. You have brought Poland, in a cultured style and without using invectives, to the brink of disaster. You have led this country to complete ruin, and this nation to poverty – and still you dream of Versailles. You will not experience it in this room, that is for sure!

If you do not change your policy, then all these villains, smelly bones and dung will come to Warsaw to remind you of their rights. [outburst of laughter]... And you are laughing, laughing at people on the bazaars. You are laughing at those who say that Poland is being sold out, that your policies have led to 3 million unemployed... Well, laugh if you have to...

The media created the current situation. You are all under the media's influence, and you yield to it. Unfortunately the vast majority of the media is in foreign hands – so who will represent Polish interests? If editor Jacek Żakowski says I “should be thrown into a hole with potash” – I don't know if his family is used to doing that sort of thing – that means someone wants to get rid of me. You all heed such newspapers, such rags as *Rzeczpospolita*, who write that my stance is endorsed by 1.5 million ‘ham’ [historical meaning: peasant, serf; current meaning: vulgar person, simpleton]. Are you disturbed by that? Do 1.5 million ‘ham’ mean nothing to you? They mean nothing to you because 26 million ‘non-ham’ constitute your electorate. So what will you do with the ‘ham’ electorate? Put them in gas chambers, banish them...!