

Pope lauds Polish Constitution of 1791

by Rachel Douglas

Among the several speeches Pope John Paul II gave during his June 1-9 pilgrimage to Poland, concerning the mission of Poland in Europe today, his talk on June 8 at the Royal Castle in Warsaw is of outstanding significance for the battle in Europe and throughout the world, against the pestilence of usury. In Poland, where that virus, deceptively packaged with the label "free market economics," is ravaging the country's productive capacity and killing the population, the speech could become a turning point.

"Allow me to start with a long quotation," began the Polish Pope:

" 'Persuaded that our common fate depends entirely upon establishing and rendering perfect a national constitution; convinced by a long train of experience of many defects in our government, and willing to profit by the present circumstances of Europe, and by the favorable moment which has restored us to ourselves; free from the disgraceful shackles of foreign influence; prizing more than life, and every personal consideration, the political existence, external independence, and internal liberty of the nation, whose care is entrusted to us; desirous, moreover, to deserve the blessing and gratitude, not only of our contemporaries, but also of future generations; for the sake of the public good, for securing our liberty, and maintaining our kingdom and our possessions; in order to exert our natural rights with zeal and firmness, we do solemnly establish the present Constitution, which we declare wholly inviolable in every part, till such period as shall be prescribed by law, when the nation, if it should think fit, and deem it necessary, may alter by its express will such articles therein as shall be found inadequate.' "

The quotation came from the Polish Constitution of 1791, known as the May 3 Constitution. Passed by the so-called Four Years Sejm (parliament), this was the first codified constitution to be promulgated in Europe in modern times. Worldwide, as John Paul II observed, "It was preceded only by the Constitution of the United States."

The May 3 Constitution was short-lived, since Russia invaded in 1792 and crushed the Polish reforms. The Second

and Third Partitions of Poland followed in 1793 and 1794, in which the nation of Poland was erased from the map for over a century, surviving only in the minds and hearts of Poles until it could be restored in 1918.

Pope Wojtyla evoked not only the 200-year-old Polish document, but the global setting in which it was created: the international republican upsurge during and after the American War of Independence. "Also now," he said, "after the breakthrough events of 1989, that same historical document serves as an exemplary point of departure for the new constitution, on which the life of the entire state community will be based in the Third Republic.

"When we deeply consider the text previously cited, we are struck by the important analogies: that today it is not a question of taking advantage of the conflicts present in Europe at the close of [this] century, a century that has been burdened with the memory of two great world wars, and more with the memory of the totalitarian systems which, following the collapse of one of them, continued to flourish under the political decisions of Yalta. Can it not be said at the same time, that the events of this century have restored us to ourselves by the same token, as the authors of the Constitution of 200 years ago say?"

The Pope went on to discuss the mission of Poland, for "every nation and every individual has their calling." In the period after World War II, he said, Poland's "active role . . . was expressed above all as a conscious movement in defense of the sovereignty of society destroyed by the totalitarian system. That movement reached its fullest form, from 1989, in the Polish Solidarnosci. And despite the suppression of the union during martial law, it did not cease to act in the same direction." Then he spoke of "the way to our Polish identity in Europe" today, which would have to temper the development of the "free market," with "solidarity," the love of mankind (see *EIR*, June 21, 1991).

The real 'Polish model'

The Pope's introduction of the May 3 Constitution in this setting implies the solution to the economic policy crisis in his native Poland. The 1791 document, published the same year as Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures*, and related measures adopted at that time, incorporated essentials of the American System of Political Economy.

The American System was expressed in the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States, with its pledge to "promote the general Welfare." The Polish May 3 Constitution's "for the sake of the public good" embodied the same idea. Adopted just two years apart, the two constitutions were manifestos of the same international movement, dedicated to the defeat of the ruinous "free trade" doctrine of the British. The Polish document bore the imprint of patriots who fought for American liberty, then their own.

Tadeusz Kosciuszko, the military engineer who built the Continental Army's fortifications at the Battle of Saratoga

and at West Point, returned to his homeland, Poland, in 1784. A charter member of the organization of veteran officers in the American War of Independence, the Society of the Cincinnati, Kosciuszko applied American nation-building principles in Poland.

This extended to economics, which Kosciuszko studied as diligently as he did military affairs. While the May 3 Constitution, influenced by Kosciuszko and his fellows, entrusted parliament with the responsibility for "public expenses, both ordinary and extraordinary," and designated that a Minister of Finances should sit on the King's Council, the Four-Year Sejm also passed more explicit legislation. It created a national bank, which was required to issue loans to finance manufacturing at a preferential rate of 4%. A ceiling on all rates was set at 5%, to encourage investment and prevent usury.

If such principles of the 1791 constitutionalists were revived in Poland today, the notorious austerity plans of Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, under which the "free market" reforms in Poland were tooled for gouging productive investment, diverting production, and slashing the population's consumption in order to service debt to Western banks at some percentage points above the London Interbank Rate, would have to be outlawed.

Representatives of the Schiller Institute, who have visited Poland to circulate the modern "American System" program, Lyndon LaRouche's "Productive Triangle," find a keen interest among Poles in this route out of the crisis. The people who fought for years to break away from the tyranny of Soviet domination are not enthusiastic about their enslavement to usurious conditions, imported by International Monetary Fund-linked advisers under the banner of "free market," and dubbed "the Polish model." An economic policy coherent with the May 3 Constitution, cited by Pope John Paul II as a guide for upholding Poland's sovereignty today, would be an entirely different Polish model, full of promise.

The resonance of today's battles in Europe with the events of the late eighteenth century is just what LaRouche discerned in his July 4, 1989 campaign platform, when he told Americans, with reference to the spread of nationalist movements against communist tyranny in the East and International Monetary Fund tyranny in the Americas: "One of your problems as a citizen, is that there is nothing in the past experience of any living person to compare with this new development now being shown so prominently in the communist world. The last period of history to be compared with this new revolutionary wave is the influence upon the world of the 1763-1789 American struggle for independence and federal unity of our states. As the student martyrs in China's May and June events have emphasized repeatedly, this new revolutionary nationalist movement against inhuman tyrannies . . . is a rebirth of that American Revolution as our martyred President Lincoln reaffirmed it in his Gettysburg Address."

Schiller Institute in Slovakia

On Monday, June 17, the Schiller Institute held a very successful conference on the Vienna-Paris-Berlin "Productive Triangle" proposed by Lyndon LaRouche, in Bratislava, Slovakia. Over 60 high-level political and economic leaders of the Slovakian republic took part. Slovakia, with 5 million inhabitants, represents one-third of the population of the Czechoslovakian state.

The conference was held in the headquarters of the Slovakian Christian Democratic Movement, the majority party which controls the government led by Prime Minister Jan Carnugurski. Forestry and Water Management Minister William Oberhauser, one of the ministers who entered the new government of Carnugurski, sat at the dais with German Schiller Institute president Helga Zepp-LaRouche. Attending were a large group of Slovakian parliamentarians, leaders of the Christian Democratic Movement, one minister, several deputy ministers of the economic sector, a representative from the Prague federal prime ministry, and economic experts from several research institutes and universities.

The conference was opened with greetings by an official of the education department of the Christian Democratic Movement. After Ralf Schauerhammer presented the concepts behind the Productive Triangle, Helga Zepp-LaRouche captured the attention of the participants by presenting the principles of the science of Christian economy and the history of the LaRouche movement and the Schiller Institute as the institutional opposition to the neo-malthusian policy of Bush, Kissinger, and Co. Angelika Beyreuther-Raimondi spoke about the anti-population, anti-Third World policy of the International Monetary Fund, and Paolo Raimondi exposed the disastrous policy of the Prague Finance Minister Vaclav Klaus.

Also on hand was a delegation from the Association of Hungarian Political Prisoners, whose president, Mr. Fonay, called for friendship and cooperation between Hungary and Slovakia in his brief greetings. Mr. Kovats, secretary of the group, announced a three-day international conference in Budapest, June 25-27, with the participation of all the Political Prisoners Associations of the Eastern European countries. A fuller report will appear in *EIR* next week.