

Canned journalism in Poland's 'Polityka'

by Elisabeth Hellenbroich

A series of slanderous articles on Lyndon LaRouche and the Schiller Institute appeared in the neo-liberal Polish weekly *Polityka* (No. 6 and 7, 1999), the weeklies *Najwyższy Czas* and *Wprost*, and the Catholic daily *Nasz Dziennik*, at the peak of farmers' demonstrations and strikes in Poland. Two articles in *Polityka*, the ideological mouthpiece of the former head of government and now Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, an ally of George Soros and the radical free-trade and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies he espouses, are particularly vicious, Goebbels-like concoctions.

The smears clearly manifest an offensive of the Soros networks in Poland, but one not limited to Poland. One of the *Polityka* articles was circulated in the French newspaper *Courier International*, and it was also mentioned by one German radio station.

"Is the boss of the farmers' organization Samoobrona financed by the Schiller Institute?" is the lead question in a slander written by Piotr Pylatakowski. The title, "Lepper Goes To War," is in bold letters beneath that question. Andrzej Lepper is the leader of Samoobrona, which has drawn the attention of the world media on account of its protests. According to the lies of the author, Lepper is financed by the Schiller Institute and stayed at a "secretive villa" of the Schiller Institute in Hamburg, Germany. LaRouche is identified an "agent of Moscow," and the absurd proof offered is that LaRouche is alleged—quite contrary to fact—to have come into Poland each time he visited, via Russia. In addition to such rather obvious nonsense, the *Polityka* writers, Piotr Pylatakowski and Wojciech Markiewicz, concoct a bizarre collection of confused slanders, in the old Stasi style, but mostly drawn from American sources.

In whichever country slanders were circulated against the Schiller Institute in recent years, and regardless of whether the media were left-wing, liberal, right-wing, or radical, they always carry the same signature: They are all based on smear information out of the circles of Soros, Vice President Al Gore, and the American collaborators of East Germany's secret police, the Stasi, among the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, along with the right-wing Heritage Foundation in the United States.

Balcerowicz under pressure

These recent slanders appeared just as growing social discontent is breaking out in eastern and western Europe.

Poland suffered a drastic collapse in exports in recent months, due to the crisis in Asia, Russia, and Brazil. Reduced industrial production and the effects of the recession in western Europe led to a collapse of GNP, and the Polish currency, the zloty, fell to its lowest level in four months. The world crisis is having its worst effects in the agricultural sector: collapsing prices on the world market go hand in hand with collapsing income of producers, and exports to Russia have been drastically reduced. There is no parity pricing, and since Poland became a member of the European Union, it is now threatened by cheaper imports, which would mean the end for many farming concerns. All over the country, farmers reacted with protests. According to the most recent public opinion polls, only 29% of the population support Balcerowicz's policies, and 71% support the demands of the farmers for a more just economic policy.

The Swiss financial daily *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* conducted a background interview with Balcerowicz at the recent World Economic Forum in Davos. The title was "Poland's Shock Therapy—the Stubbornness of Leszek Balcerowicz." With obvious reference to the criticism of globalization voiced by U.S. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad, and others, Balcerowicz said that "despite all of the concerned rhetoric about globalization and its effects," he sees no danger resulting from his policy of a radical free-market economy. Globalization brings no "new" risks, he said. Balcerowicz thinks that discussions about possible interventionist measures in order to bring globalization under control are as mistaken as efforts to coordinate economic policy, the daily commented. "If governments make no mistakes in a system of flexible exchange rates, no restrictions are necessary," it said.

Balcerowicz is quite pleased with his "record of performance" in Poland. He recently honored Harvard's Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, the author of shock therapy, for his services in the transformation of Poland. From Balcerowicz's point of view, it is a weakness of Polish policy that privatization is moving so slowly. The explosive increase of costs in the health sector are as much a problem for him as his other finance minister colleagues, according to *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.

Those in Poland who have followed the Schiller Institute's evaluation of the world financial crisis over the last several years, and its alternative proposals for a New Bretton Woods, as well as the Eurasian Land-Bridge, have seen the confirmation of what the Schiller Institute said in the recent developments. The successful policies of capital and exchange controls introduced in Malaysia, as well as the contributions on LaRouche in the Russian press, such as *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* and *Kommersant-daily*, show that LaRouche's proposals enjoy increasing support internationally. Balcerowicz was hit on a sensitive flank. Historical developments will take a turn which is quite different from that which Soros, Balcerowicz, and other friends of the IMF, with its model of radical free-trade, wish for.