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Reg. PA  
Mr. Krienderer  
CEERA

POLAND'S POLITICAL PARTIES: STAN TYMINSKI'S PARTY "X"

SUMMARY

STAN TYMINSKI IS PLANNING THE INITIAL CONGRESS OF HIS "X" PARTY, SET TO TAKE PLACE IN THE FIRST HALF OF MAY. THE PARTY ITSELF IS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT, WITH NO OTHER KNOWN NAMES IN POLISH POLITICS ASSOCIATED WITH IT. TYMINSKI HAS BEEN CASTING ABOUT FOR AN ATTRACTIVE PARTY PHILOSOPHY AND APPEARS TO HAVE SETTLED ON AN UNCERTAIN AND ADMITTEDLY CYNICAL MIX OF POPULISM, NATIONALISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM. IN A MEETING APRIL 8, TYMINSKI STRUCK US AS MORE LUCID THAN IN THE PAST BUT ALSO MORE OPPORTUNISTIC. HIS PUBLIC PERSONA REMAINS THAT OF A REASONABLE AND THOUGHTFUL POLITICIAN, BUT TYMINSKI TOLD US HE INTENDED TO PLAY ON AND PROFIT FROM POPULAR FEARS AND DISCONTENT. IN SPITE OF HIS DECLARED ATTEMPTS TO ENTER THE MAINSTREAM, TYMINSKI RELIES ON EXTRAORDINARY ACCUSATIONS AND "DOCUMENTED CONSPIRACIES" OF WHICH NO ONE ELSE IS AWARE.

POLAND'S MAINSTREAM POLITICAL LEADERS -- FROM THE DEMOCRATIC UNION/ROAD, THE FREE-MARKET LIBERAL PARTIES, CENTRUM, CITIZENS' COMMITTEES AND ELSEWHERE -- BELIEVE TYMINSKI IS UNBALANCED AND PROBABLY INCAPABLE OF SUSTAINING A VIABLE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. BUT NEITHER THEY NOR WE DISMISS THE PHENOMENON HE REPRESENTS. "TYMINSKI" IS WIDELY USED AS A CODE-WORD FOR A KEY PROBLEM OF POLISH POLITICS: MAINSTREAM PARTIES ARE STILL TINY AND THEIR ROOTS ARE SHALLOW; SOLIDARITY ITSELF IS UNCERTAIN OF ITS EMERGING IDENTITY IN A NEW POLAND. VIEWS DIFFER AS TO THE EXTENT OF SOCIAL DISSATISFACTION AND POLITICAL ALIENATION IN POLAND. BUT MOST AGREE THAT IN THE SMALLER CITIES AND TOWNS, TYMINSKI HIMSELF, "NEW TYMINSKIES," OR MANY "LITTLE TYMINSKIES" -- PEOPLE WITH EXTREMIST PLATFORMS FROM "OUT OF NOWHERE," WHOSE LACK OF PARTICIPATION IN ANY FORMER POLITICAL STRUCTURE IS CITED AS A SELLING POINT -- MAY FIND A PLACE. END SUMMARY.

WE MET WITH STAN TYMINSKI FOR ALMOST TWO HOURS ON 8 APRIL IN HIS MOTHER'S HOUSE IN KOMOROW JUST OUTSIDE OF WARSAW. THE HOUSE IS ALSO TEMPORARILY SERVING AS THE HEADQUARTERS OF TYMINSKI'S "X" PARTY UNTIL IT CAN MOVE NEXT WEEK TO A MORE CENTRAL LOCATION ON WARSAW'S NOWY SWIAT, A FASHIONABLE DOWNTOWN SHOPPING STREET.

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THE PARTY: ALMOST NOTHING

TYMINSKI OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY ASSERTING HIS "X" PARTY IS ENJOYING GREATER SUCCESS AND POPULARITY THAN EVEN HE HAD IMAGINED POSSIBLE. IN ONLY THREE WEEKS OF SOLICITING FOR MEMBERS, TYMINSKI BOASTED THAT OVER 600 POLES HAD SIGNED ON AND PAID THEIR DUES. WHEN WE NOTED THAT A RECENT PRESS REPORT HAD QUOTED THE NUMBER OF "X" PARTY MEMBERS IN THE SMALL TOWN OF KOSZALIN ALONE AT OVER 600, TYMINSKI WAS VISIBLY UNSETTLED AND HAZARDED A GUESS THAT THE "CENTRAL COMPUTER SYSTEM" HADN'T YET REGISTERED ALL THE "X" PARTY MEMBERS WHOSE APPLICATIONS WERE IN THE WORKS. TYMINSKI LATER NOTED THAT THE "CENTRAL COMPUTER SYSTEM" CONSISTED OF A SINGLE PERSONAL COMPUTER IN THE OFFICE IN HIS MOTHER'S HOME.

DIFFICULTIES IN TYMINSKI'S EFFORTS TO FORM THE "X" PARTY AND TO DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP CADRE DEMONSTRATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH TYMINSKI FINDS HIMSELF ON THE FRINGES. NOT A SINGLE PERSON FROM HIS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN REMAINED ON EITHER HIS PERSONAL OR PARTY'S STAFF, AND TYMINSKI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NO POLISH POLITICIANS WANTED TO ASSOCIATE WITH HIM. TYMINSKI CLAIMED HIS PARTY EMPLOYED ONLY TWO FULL-TIME STAFF MEMBERS, ALONG WITH ONE SECRETARY. ONE OF THE FULL-TIME STAFF, WANDA BULYCZ, IS A FORMER MEMBER OF THE NOW-DEFUNCT ULTRA-NATIONALIST ORGANIZATION "GRUNWALD," WHICH TYMINSKI ACKNOWLEDGED HAD "ONLY ONE PLANK IN ITS PLATFORM -- EXTREME ANTI-SEMITISM."

ORGANIZATIONALLY, TYMINSKI WAS ABLE TO PREDICT LITTLE ABOUT THE COURSE OF THE "X" PARTY. HE HOPED TO RENT A WARSAW MOVIE THEATER FOR THE PARTY'S FIRST CONGRESS, WHICH IS TENTATIVELY SLATED TO TAKE PLACE IN MID-MAY. ALL MEMBERS WILL BE INVITED; THERE WILL BE NO PRE-SELECTION OF DELEGATES TO THE CONGRESS.

TYMINSKI WAS UNABLE TO TELL US ANYTHING OF SUBSTANCE ABOUT THE GOALS OR AGENDA OF THE CONGRESS. HE HOPED THE MEMBERS WOULD DECIDE EVERYTHING FROM THE ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED, TO THE CONTENT OF THE PARTY'S "CONSTITUTION," TO THE VERY NAME OF THE PARTY. TYMINSKI HOPED THAT THE ISSUE OF THE NAME WOULD NOT PROVE SO DIVISIVE AS TO "BRING THE CONGRESS CRASHING DOWN AROUND US." TYMINSKI HIMSELF -- REVERSING AN EARLIER POSITION -- SAID HE WOULD PREFER THE PARTY RETAIN THE "X" NAME; HE EXPLAINED THAT SINCE "X" IS THE MARK THAT VOTERS PLACE ON ELECTION BALLOTS, THE PARTY NAME IS A "CATCHY" DEVICE.

THE PLATFORM

DESPITE THE FACT THAT TYMINSKI MAY FIND HIMSELF PERSONALLY ISOLATED ON THE POLISH POLITICAL SCENE, HE EXPRESSED A POLITICAL WORLD-VIEW THAT WILLY NILLY MAY EARN THE "X" PARTY A PLACE ON THE SPECTRUM. IT IS TOO MUCH TO CALL THIS WORLD-VIEW A "POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY," AND INDEED TYMINSKI HIMSELF

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EXPLICITLY DENIED EVEN HAVING A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY. BUT THERE IS DEVELOPING A CERTAIN POPULIST/PARANOID CONSISTENCY IN TYMINSKI'S OUTLOOK, AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS OF NATIONALISM AND OPEN ANTI-SEMITISM WILL ATTRACT GREAT ATTENTION AND, UNFORTUNATELY, SOME VOTES IN THE UPCOMING PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

TYMINSKI TOLD US HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF A "NATIONAL DEMOCRAT" (REFERRING TO THE PRE-WWII NATIONALIST PARTY HEADED BY ROMAN DMOWSKI). AS HE EXPLAINED IT, A NATIONAL DEMOCRAT IS FOR "POLAND FIRST," AND POLAND, AS HE PUT IT, IS GRAVELY THREATENED BY CONSPIRACIES INVOLVING "POLES OF JEWISH ORIGIN" WHO ARE SEEKING TO DIVERT POLISH WEALTH INTO ISRAELI COFFERS.

IN TYMINSKI'S VIEW, MOST OF THE PEOPLE HARMING POLAND OR "PERSONALLY ATTACKING" TYMINSKI ARE "SIMPLY JEWS." FORMER PRIME MINISTER TADEUSZ MAZOWIECKI FARED SO POORLY IN THE FIRST ROUND OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ACCORDING TO TYMINSKI, BECAUSE THE POLISH PEOPLE DISCOVERED AND MISTRUSTED HIS JEWISH ORIGINS. GEORGE SOROS, JEFFREY SACHS, AND MINISTER OF FINANCE LESZEK BALCEROWICZ, ARE PLOTTING TOGETHER TO DIVERT SCARCE POLISH FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES TO ISRAEL SINCE -- IN TYMINSKI'S VIEW -- U.S. SUPPORT OF THE ISRAELI ARMED FORCES AND ECONOMY WILL SOON DWINDLE TO ZERO.

IN SUCH CONDITIONS, JEWS THROUGHOUT POLAND WILL PLACE ISRAELI INTERESTS AHEAD OF POLISH NEEDS. BY TYMINSKI'S COUNT THERE ARE 10,000 PEOPLE IN POLAND WHO ADMIT TO JEWISH ROOTS, AND ANOTHER THREE MILLION WHO ARE AFRAID TO DO SO PUBLICLY. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE JEWISH THREAT THEREFORE NECESSITATES THE "POLAND FIRST" ATTITUDE OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATS AND THE "X" PARTY.

"ALL I CAN DISCOVER THAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE IN COMMON, THESE PEOPLE WHO ARE BLEEDING POLAND AND WHO ARE THREATENING MY POLITICAL CHANCES," TYMINSKI GRINNED, "IS THAT THEY ARE JEWISH." BRONISLAW GEREMEK, CHAIRMAN OF THE SEJM'S CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION, DRAFTED PROVISIONS IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION LAW IN SUCH A WAY THAT "THEY AFFECT ONLY ME." (RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS IN ONE VERSION OF THE DRAFT ELECTORAL LAW WOULD PREVENT TYMINSKI FROM HOLDING NATIONAL OFFICE.) TYMINSKI ALSO ACCUSED "THE ENTIRE TOP LEADERSHIP" OF POLISH TELEVISION OF CONDUCTING A "JEWISH OFFENSIVE" AGAINST HIS PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND POLITICAL SUCCESS. BEYOND THE REMOVAL OF ALL THE JEWISH CONSPIRATORS FROM THEIR POWERFUL OFFICES, TYMINSKI COULD OFFER NO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR A "NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC" POLISH FUTURE.

#### THE CYNICISM

TYMINSKI NOTED MORE THAN ONCE THAT "ANYONE WITH A SCHEME" COULD "SUCK POLAND DRY." HE ARGUED THAT BUSINESSMEN AND POLITICIANS COULD RIDE A "GRAVY TRAIN" IF THEY WERE SKILLED ENOUGH TO TAKE

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ADVANTAGE OF THE "NAIVE CATHOLIC POLISH PEOPLE." DELUDING THE POLISH PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR MONEY OR THEIR VOTES WAS AS EASY AS "STEALING CANDY IN A NURSERY," HE SAID, AND WE WERE CONVINCED THAT TYMINSKI WAS INTENTIONALLY REFERRING TO HIS OWN EXPERIENCE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

COMMENT: WE ARE UNABLE TO JUDGE HOW MUCH TYMINSKI BELIEVED HIS ANTI-SEMITIC AND POPULIST RHETORIC AND HOW MUCH HIS VIEWS WERE MOTIVATED BY A BREATH-TAKING CYNICISM (MIXED WITH AN EQUALLY BREATH-TAKING NAIVETE IN BEING SO FRANK WITH US). TYMINSKI SEEMED EQUALLY COMFORTABLE IN BOTH HIS CYNICISM AND ACCUSATIONS. END COMMENT.

DICTATORSHIP

TYMINSKI REPEATEDLY DOUBTED WHETHER THE POLISH PEOPLE WERE "MATURE ENOUGH" TO ACCEPT AND DEVELOP DEMOCRACY. HE BELIEVED MOST POLES, LIKE HIM, WERE AGNOSTIC AS TO WHETHER DEMOCRACY OR DICTATORSHIP PROMISES MORE FOR THE FUTURE OF POLAND. HE STATED THAT "WITHIN TWO TO THREE MONTHS" VIOLENT CIVIL UNREST WILL SWEEP POLAND AS A RESULT OF PROFOUND DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. AT THAT TIME, POLES MAY LOOK TO TYMINSKI TO TAKE THE REINS AS A "VERY POWERFUL DICTATOR." HE HOPED IT WOULDN'T COME TO THAT, HE SMILED, BUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLAND MIGHT REQUIRE THE POSTPONEMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN FAVOR OF PLACING CENTRAL AUTHORITY IN HIS OWN HANDS.

THE BRIEFCASE

TYMINSKI FOLLOWERS WILL RECALL THAT DURING THE SECOND ROUND OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, HE BROUGHT A BLACK BRIEFCASE TO A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH LECH WALESZA. INSIDE THE BRIEFCASE, ACCORDING TO TYMINSKI, WERE DOCUMENTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE THAT WERE SAID TO IMPLICATE WALESZA IN A VARIETY OF UNSAVORY, ILLEGAL, OR COMPROMISING ACTS. LATER, AFTER THE ELECTIONS, TYMINSKI ADMITTED THAT THE BRIEFCASE WAS, IN FACT, COMPLETELY EMPTY (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A COPY OF "NEWSWEEK").

WITH US, HOWEVER, THE BRIEFCASE ONCE AGAIN WAS FILLED WITH "EVIDENCE" CONNECTING WALESZA TO A SERIES OF SERIOUS CRIMES. TYMINSKI CLAIMED TO HAVE PROOF THAT IN WALESZA'S "LOST YEARS" BEFORE THE AGE OF 25, HE ROAMED THE STREETS OF GDANSK AS A PETTY THIEF AND HAD KILLED AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE. TYMINSKI SAID THAT, AT THIS POINT, HE HAD NO INCENTIVE TO RELEASE THE INFORMATION, BECAUSE SUCH AN EXPOSURE OF WALESZA'S "TRUE NATURE" COULD ONLY BRING HARM TO POLAND.

COMMENT: POLAND IS UNDER CONTINUING STRESS AS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION PROCEEDS; ITS NEW DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS ARE STRUGGLING. BUT WE DO NOT SHARE TYMINSKI'S BELIEF THAT POLAND'S POLITICAL CULTURE IS SO DEBASED THAT A PROGRAM OF ANTI-SEMITIC NATIONALISM WILL PROVE A WINNING

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TICKET. NOR DO WE WRITE OFF THE "TYMINSKI ELECTORATE" -- THE ROUGHLY 25 PERCENT OF VOTERS WHO SUPPORTED HIM IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. LEADERS OF THE MAINSTREAM PARTIES, SOLIDARITY LEADERS AND WALESAS'S PERSONAL ADVISORS HAVE REPEATEDLY TOLD US THAT THEIR KEY TASK IS FINDING A WAY TO "CAPTURE THE TYMINSKI" ELECTORATE; TO FIND POLITICAL PLATFORMS THAT WILL BRING THE FORMERLY AND BITTERLY DISENFRANCHISED INTO A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRATIC CULTURE. END COMMENT.

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