Polish citizenship for Pol-Ams? By: Robert Strybel,
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Warsaw – Now that Poland is no longer a communist state behind the Iron Curtain, it appears a growing number of Polish Americans are becoming interested in Poland’s past and present out of a genuine curiosity about Polish citizenship. Some are interested in dual citizenship for patriotic or family reasons. Others who are not interested may reason that they then shouldn’t my citizenship status reflect both elements of my identity?“ might be more of a way of enjoying the benefits of two cultures. There might also be highly personal reasons: “My late dad, a postwar DP, always dreamed of returning to Poland. He knew it, though he had not lived to see Poland regain its freedom in 1989. My getting Polish citizenship would have made him very happy,” Others are guided by more practical concerns. For example, if they involve buying real estate in Poland, receiving a property inheritance or reclaiming land that once belonged to their ancestors. Others hope to retire in Poland, where a Social Security check goes farther than in America, although only a permanent residency card, not Polish citizenship, is required. But for those who wish to start a business or making investments not only in Poland, but throughout the 27-country European Union, a Polish passport will make all the difference. It enables a person to travel freely from country to country and state to state without going through customs checks, but he/she likes without worrying about visas. Although Poland’s real-estate market is gradually cooling down somewhat, in recent years it was among Europe’s hottest and annual returns of 100 percent more were not uncommon. Although Polish citizenship and some spare capital to invest provided a more hospitable environment than the canton from which they had fled. Polish kings and princes granted special privileges such as trading rights and judicial autonomy, and it was on Polish territory that Jews developed their most vibrant and flourishing religious and cultural heritage. Naturally there had to be some friction which nearly always occurs when two completely different cultures come into contact. But the wrongs and the resentment they generated worked both ways. At various times, Jews and Poles were both victims and victims. The pogroms of Jews in Russian-occupied 19th-century Poland have been widely publicized, but why is so little known about the Jews who turned Polish 19th-century freedom-fighters into victims? Was the Jewish occupation forces? Jewish inkneippers were known to gave peasants drinks on credit to gain their trust. Gross’ book “Was grafted generous loans on usurious terms to Polish noblemen and then claimed their property for non-payment. In 1918, many Polish Jews were unhappy about Poland’s regained independence, preferring to live in a Russian- or German- ruled state, and welcomed the Bolshevik armies invading Poland in 1920. During the inter-war period, Jews were seen as monopolizing the legal and medical professions as well as the entertainment industry and using unscrupulous practices to drive many an ethnic Pole out of business. And the illegal, pro-Wehrmacht I Communist Party of Poland was largely led by Jewish subversives in the service of Stalin.” The Jedwabne pogrom occurred after nearly two years of Soviet occupation (1939-1941) in which many Jews were willing Soviet collaborators who openly persecuted their Polish neighbors. Self-styled “peons” and “workers’ militia” opened fire on Polish soldiers and fingered Polish patriots to the NKVD. In post-Soviet era Poland Jews were disproportionately overrepresented in the communist secret police who imprisoned, tortured and killed Poles whose only crime was want their country to be free. Considerable evidence suggest the Kielce incident had been a Soviet-orchestrated provocation to take the heat off the Warsaw regime which had been criticized in the Free World for its rigged referendum four days earlier. But Gross conveniently glosses over or ignores anything that reveals widespread Jewish collaboration with the Soviets. Instead he prefers to provide an existing Jewish-held stereotype including the allegation that Poles are intrinsically evil, while Jews are victims, never villains. But there is an indisputable logic in his approach. The Jewish-American reading public and pro-Semitic liberal intellectuals constitute a far more lucrative market than Poland. It was therefore a far better career move for Gross’ part to first publish “Fear in America” and follow it up with the Polish version. The latter will surely amass endless readership out of grossly exaggerated relations, although the profits it produces will undoubtedly be far more modest.»