

Reversing Poles: how Poland brought its workers home

An article by Ashley Seager in the *guardian.co.uk* website reports... With Britain tumbling into its deepest recession since the early 1980s, it is small wonder that so many Poles are heading home.

The Polish economy – now the world's 20th largest – is proving a lot more resilient to the financial crisis than Britain's, mainly because its banking system is not riddled with the toxic material that has poisoned the UK's once-mighty banks. And it is attracting former emigres home in droves.

"We really welcome these people home who have been working in Britain and Ireland," Aleksander Grad, the country's treasury minister, told the Guardian. "In many cases these people who left were educated to degree level, often by the state at no cost, and it was a loss to the Polish economy."

It has been estimated that of Poland's 38 million people, one million have made their way to Britain and Ireland in the past five years. About 6% of the workforce left in a very short space of time – and they were generally young, motivated and well educated.

"We have suffered labour shortages because of this," said Grad. "But now they are helping stabilise the labour market. We had seen wages rising very fast."

It was no surprise that young people who left Poland for a few years would come back once they had made some money. But the decision to return has been helped by the downturn in the British economy and the relative robustness of the Polish economy.

The fall in the pound this year was also an important factor. "The appreciation of the z³oty certainly changed the calculation also," said Grad.

He added that Dell's recent announcement that it would move 2,000 jobs from Limerick to Poland was a "very good sign" for the Polish economy, although it was ironic because plenty of Poles were already working at Dell in Ireland.

Polish growth is slowing but it still managed about 5.5% expansion in 2008, much stronger than in Britain. The government is still forecasting growth of more than 3% in 2009. Britain's economy is set to contract by up to 3%.

"We don't want to be compared to other countries in our region who had to borrow from the International Monetary Fund," said Ludwik Sobolewski, head of the Warsaw stock exchange. "We are more integrated with countries such as Germany."

Banking laws were written conservatively when Poland passed from communism into a market-based economy, meaning the banks were forbidden from investing in credit derivatives and sub-prime mortgages and so are in much better shape than rivals around the world.

"International investors make a mistake if they lump us all into one -basket. For example, a few Polish people have mortgages in foreign currencies but the number is really very small," Sobolewski said, referring to the recent -crises in countries such as Hungary where big falls in their currencies have led to difficulties for citizens who took out mortgages in euros or Swiss francs.

Poland has also not suffered a property boom so it does not have the sort of problems Britain and the US face.

The government has launched a 90bn-złoty (£19bn) stimulus package to support the economy and banking system, including the recapitalisation of one bank and pledges of credit to others as well as loan guarantees for small and medium-sized enterprises. Many of the measures

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Mr. Moszczyński of The Federation of Poles in Great Britain wrote an article which was published in the online edition of the Daily Mail (see first item below). The Guardian, another British paper, published a followup article (see second item below).

[\(Unlike the U.S., England has a Press Complaints Commission\)](#)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1039255/The-Polish-community-United-Kingdom.html#>

The Polish community and the United Kingdom

By: *Wiktor Moszczyński*

Last updated on 05th August 2008

Older readers of the Daily Mail will be aware that here has been a sizeable Polish community in this country since World War Two when Polish forces fought alongside British servicemen against the Nazi threat. Since then, an estimated one million Polish citizens have arrived in the UK after the European Union expansion in 2004, mostly to work.

Poles have made a significant contribution to both the Polish and British economies. According to the National Bank of Poland, about £4 billion is sent each year by Polish workers in the UK to their families at home. However - according to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research - the Polish workforce alone has contributed £12 billion to the British economy between 2004 and 2006.

Poles are integrating well into the British way of life and thousands have set up their own business. We have all heard about the cheap Polish plumbers and seen the smiling Polish waitresses and shop assistants. Poles have helped to revive British agriculture (especially in Scotland, Wales and Lincolnshire) and to boost, until earlier this year, the recent house-building boom in this country.

Unfortunately many Poles were exploited as they struggled to obtain the legal minimum wage and basic employment rights. At the other end of the economic scale, thousands of entrepreneurs have now set up their own businesses, while others can be found in responsible positions in the National Health Services (NHS), social services, accountancy and banking.

According to Piotr Grzeszkiewicz, director of recruitment agency Sara-Int, the Polish workforce contributes about £1.9 billion a year to the British exchequer in income tax and national insurance, not including council tax. Poles are integrating well into the British way of life, especially if they are setting up families here. Of course we are aware that their presence has impacted considerably on the resources of local councils, schools and health trusts, but much of this is covered by tax contributions.

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Papal Reprimand for Catholic Radio

By: *Jan Puhl* in Toruń

An Associated Press article reports... The Polish Catholic broadcaster Radio Maryja openly agitates against Jews and strongly supports the Kaczyński brothers, Poland's ruling populist leaders. The German Pope wants to rein in the station, but the founding priest isn't likely to toe the Vatican line willingly.

A solid steel fence protects Radio Maryja's headquarters from the outside world. The public has no access to this high-tech fortification in the suburbs of Toruń. Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, founder of the nationalist Catholic radio station, lives in the pretentious main building with satellite dishes and relay towers rising in the background.

Father Rydzyk sees no contradiction between wearing a collar and spreading his politics via satellite. He believes in using modern technology to spread his call for the salvation of God-fearing Poland to hundreds of thousands of homes. But other people do see a contradiction -- namely the German-born pope, Benedict XVI. He wants Rydzyk to quit his rabble-rousing, but the stubborn priest won't be easy to silence.

A typical day at Radio Maryja starts with prayers, hymns, and cooking tips. The controversial stuff doesn't start until later. A show called "Unfinished Conversations" airs at 9:40 p.m. and deals with topics like "The Battle for a Woman's Worth: Stopping Pornography." Listeners get to call in. Rydzyk rarely sits at the microphone himself, but he sometimes adds his input via by telephone towards the end of the show. For example, he once called the European Union a conspiracy of Freemasons, who want to force Catholic Poland to accept gay marriage. One Radio Maryja commentary in March suggested that Jews were sabotaging the struggle for democracy in Eastern European democracy in Ukraine and Belarus -- while Poles battled on the frontlines. Radio Maryja also warned that the "Holocaust Industry" wields influence worldwide and expects "kickbacks" from Warsaw.

Critics of the station are denounced as police-state informers -- including even the legendary head of the Solidarity movement, Lech Wałęsa, last spring. But Rydzyk's favorite targets are Germans, who -- he says -- still haven't let go of their Nazi-era wish to conquer Poland.

Trained in Germany

Rydzyk, ironically, learned his trade in Germany. In the 1980s he served in a Bavarian parish and laid the groundwork for a Catholic station called Radio Maria International. He returned home to Poland in 1991 and set up a radio service to broadcast his own sermons. These stirred up controversy in the post-Soviet '90s,

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Russian daily sympathetic to Poland-Obama relations

A January 23, 2009 article on the *thenews.pl* website printed... The Russian paper *Wriemia Nowostiej* writes that Poland should not have high expectations of the new US President Barack Obama as George W. Bush had far more interest in the country.

The paper claims that "Poland is looking for friendship with the new US administration" because they enjoyed sympathetic relations with Bush, even though he did not actually make a good-bye phone call to the country as he did to so many others.

The snub by Bush was, according to the paper, a real show of ingratitude towards Polish political elites, who have been one of the US's closest allies over the past eight years.

Poland was one of the first countries to pledge support and troops for the war in Iraq in March 2003 and in August 2008, the country signed the US-Polish agreement on the anti-missile defense shield, recalls the Russian paper.

The Moscow daily claims that all of these things have not necessarily been in the best interest of Poland, and "Americans still haven't approved the visa waiver program for Poles."

According to the paper, it is unfortunate for Warsaw that Obama was elected considering that, on his first campaign tour of Europe, he completely ignored Poland.

However, the paper expresses surprise that, after Tuesday's inauguration, Polish President Lech Kaczynski and PM Donald Tusk sent congratulations messages and invitations to the new President to visit Poland as soon as possible.

The paper claims that sort of diplomatic move is strategic in that it allows the politicians to maintain open relations with the US and opens up dialogue to talk about future cooperation in NATO -- which is Poland's more important guarantee for security right now. □

Police seize anti-Stalin archive

Historian condemns raid on human rights group as bid to whitewash repression of the Soviet era

A December 7 article in the Observer (England) by Luke Harding in Moscow tells of... Eminent British historian Orlando Figes yesterday accused the Russian authorities of trying to 'rehabilitate the Stalinist regime' after armed police seized an entire archive last week detailing repression in the Soviet Union.

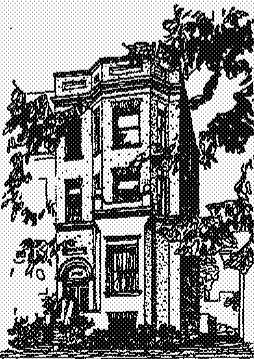
Figes, professor of history at Birkbeck, a London University college, condemned the raid on Memorial, a Russian human rights organisation. He said that the police had also taken material used in his latest book, *The Whisperers*, which details family life in Stalin's Russia.

On Thursday, armed and masked men from the investigative committee of the Russian general prosecutor's office burst into Memorial's St Petersburg office.

After a search of several hours, they confiscated its entire archive - memoirs, photographs, interviews, and other unique documents detailing the history of the gulag and the names of many of its victims.

Yesterday Figes claimed the raid 'was clearly intended to intimidate Memorial'. The confiscated archive included unique documents detailing the 'Soviet terror from 1917 to the 1960s,' he said, adding that the office was 'an important centre for historical research' and a 'voice for tens of thousands of victims of repression

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Whats Your Legacy

Many people talk about leaving their will to worthy causes, but don't have a will, and do not realize it requires a will to do so. The laws of most states make it clear that personal property goes automatically, by law, to your nearest relative, even if they are quite distant ones, unless you have a legal will that says otherwise. If you have no relative, it goes to the state. More than half of all adult Americans die without having made their wills. Most of them undoubtedly planned to do so, but never got around to it. Some had wills but didn't keep them current. When you have a will, you should update it every few years as conditions change. Also, always name an executor who will carry out your wishes. Besides money, non-cash possessions can also be used and contributions and various donation plans can be carried out. Be a philanthropist: leave your stocks, bonds, real estate, art, valuable collection or insurance to continue the Polish - American traditions. Your will is the most important way of giving. When you're gone, it is a legacy that is not forgotten. In your will, you can specify what you would like your donation to be used for. For help in making your will, contact a competent lawyer. **The American Center of Polish Culture, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that needs your help and legacy.**

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