

The Enemy within.

By: *Dariusz Zakrzewski*

At the core of our civilization is our reverence for truth. Be it in the realm of religion where God is Truth or an understanding deeply woven into our culture, that without truth, all rationale is futile.

It may seem so obvious, or so elusive, that bringing it up can be regarded as pointless. "What is the Truth?" Pilate asked and chose to condemn an innocent man. To what degree did his attitude reflect our own? Are we willing to sacrifice others for lack of resolve?

Soul searching is not exactly our national sport. In fact we are not very good at it. Is it because we are so utterly convinced, that we are better and can do no wrong, or is it, that quest for truth, is a path too narrow to travel? "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." These all too familiar words of the Declaration of Independence are not only the binding element upon which we rest our national identity, but a source of pride and a defining moment of understanding of who we are as a people. The question is, do we truly believe in the message they contain? Does "all man" really mean **ALL MAN**, or just the chosen people among us?

One of the liberties we take for granted is freedom of speech. The notion that ideas can freely be shared with no imposed limits, as long as they are truthful and "fit to print" is a right, most of us strongly identify with and consider one of the foundations of this Republic. Democracy as a form of government is a total farce and fallacy, if information upon which decisions are based, are doctored and false.

What exactly constitutes freedom of speech? Does a man shouting in the desert, where no one will hear, exercise his right of free speech? Is a communist free to praise the works of Marx or criticizing capitalism endowed with the blessings of liberty? You may judge these questions absurd, but is this not, what has become of our fundamental right we call "freedom of speech?"

Too far fetched? Consider a few issues.

Was Miss California, Carrie Prejean, free to speak her beliefs, without adverse consequences? When last did you hear your representative ask, if we are not enslaved to a toxic friendship, that depletes our resources, reputation and values? Would anyone have enough courage to even bring up the topic for discussion? Should any topic and any alliance in politics be taboo and off limits? Would it not be rational to ask for the cost and the gain?

Apparently not, despite of the wisdom of our forefathers who wrote "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

If friendship with any nation becomes a dogma beyond discussion, can we as a people consider ourselves still free and sovereign? What about the recent holocaust of the Palestinians, what about Iran? Is any discourse possible anymore, beyond the official version? Does being patriotic mean "Hold the course!" regardless of consequences. What is our tolerance for dissent and capacity to find out and reason?

Claiming high moral ground requires a firm belief in the values we proclaim our own and deeds, that make them genuine. If we ourselves do not profess them, does it surprise, that no one else believes us and our intentions? We as a nation have lost our way. The fundamental problem here is not how to change what needs changing, but our resistance to learn, where we have gone wrong. "Know Thyself" is the beginning of all wisdom and the most important obstacle to the question why, we as a nation, have failed. Stating that "The King is naked" is no reason to get offended and to consider it America bashing, yet so many of us do. It seems the hubris we share, makes us immune to constructive criticism. How are we to fix anything, when we refuse to examine the causes? The crisis we are in, is not about economy, as much as it will

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How the Soviets Won the Cold War (Part 1)

By: *Justyna Ball*

<http://justyna-polishdelight.blogspot.com/>

How the Soviets Won the Cold War (Part 1)

It took my old neighbor, Kasia and me a while to remember the name of the kawiarnia/coffeehouse that we used to frequent. "Aromat" was the name, and the building was located right at the intersection of Puławska and Rakowiecka St. in Warsaw.

Right next to it was the famous Moskwa movie theatre immortalized by the even more famous picture: The image of a billboard on the side of the building, a SKOT army tank and a group of soldiers warming up at the coal pit. It was December '81. Martial Law was just announced on the 13th, and the billboard said... "Apocalypse Now." The title of the movie by Francis Ford Coppola.

The picture that circulated the globe, was taken from above the corner store of the building on Puławska St, and was by Chris Niedenthal, the son of Polish immigrants who settled in Great Britain.

As a correspondent to Newsweek, Niedenthal began his assignment in Poland in the late 70s, by taking pictures of illegal churches. The government did not allow building any so farmers built them, brick by brick, inside their barns, later destroyed the barn and the church stood there, and the government could do nothing...

After the public TV announcement by Gen Jaruzelski, "Polki i Polacy, Obywatele Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej! Zwraca sie do Was Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego..." "Poles woke up to a new reality. It's one thing to complain and predict and talk about upcoming danger, and anticipation... and another to actually experience it and lose that feeling of hope... It's that uncertainty of tomorrow that scared people, as before we were all saying "we don't know what the future will bring," but on this day you truly did not know what will happen tomorrow or even in the next hour. Curiosity was intertwined with fear.

Phones were cut off, schools were closed, events cancelled, and pretty much everything stood frozen. The gas stations stopped serving gas to private citizens. At first, we were not sure what was allowed and what was not. Large group gatherings (more than six people) were forbidden, and a "police hour" was imposed. Rumors of arrests spread quickly.

In my own apartment in the Lower Mokotów district, piles of illegal newspapers were a treat only for a short time, as they were disappearing quickly, as people came and went.

I remember my mom and step-dad, Andrzej contemplating what to do with all the Solidarność insignias that decorated our apartment as they heard that others' walls were completely destroyed when the police could not find what they were looking for. Andrzej convinced my mom not to hide anything. They decided to leave everything out in the open to... prevent the ruining of their kitchen tiles for which they worked so hard.

"Whatever they decide to look for they will find it no matter what," and my mom's kitchen was her pride and joy... The kitchen that Andrzej renovated himself with the money from his German job assignments called "delegacja." The engineering firm for which he worked sent Polish teams to design plumbing in German hospitals (both Eastern and Western Germany), they were paid better there (especially in Western Germany), and we in Poland were to keep his Polish salary!

My uncle Wojtek ran an illegal newspaper "distribution center." To help pay for the newspaper he started a "moonshining" business which also helped explain the constant visits of people.

Wojtek and Andrzej were quite a duo, amateur carpenters and mechanics. In the evenings after work they bought car parts from dismembered car dealers and constructed a small Fiat 126p from scratch! They did everything by themselves and even painted it in two tones.

Never underestimate the power of the mind of Polish people.

There is nothing that Poles cannot do... ZOMO units walked in twos, some with dogs. My girlfriends and I sometimes would spend time at "Aromat" sipping "fusy" (coffee grounds) and smoking. Back then everybody smoked and coffee was always served black with coffee grounds in a glass, Turkish style. The coat room attendant (every respected kawiarnia had to have one!) unofficially sold cigarettes to customers. At the "Kiosk (Newstand)," you could only buy Polish cigarettes: Caro, Carmen, Popularne, while at the kawiarnia, the assortment was much greater: Marlboro, Pall Mall, Camel, Stuyvesant, Dunhill, or French Gitanes or Gauloises. If my friends chipped in, we could poison ourselves with... class. Soldiers came in from the cold and always bought Popularne.

Puławska Street from Sobieskiego - that was my neighborhood.

I spent my childhood years in the Zoliborz district with my "single mom." My mom met my step-dad at work on "Fat Thursday" (you know how when you are a single mom everyone wants to fix you up with someone). When she remarried, we moved to Mokotów where the rest of my family always lived. My next and final place in Warsaw was Smolna St. in Downtown, from where I left for Germany to join Jacek.

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Calendar of Events

28, 2009, Sunday, 1:00 pm PAC Annual Election Meeting, 1:00 p.m. Pope John Paul II Polish Center, Yorba Linda. 3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda. Election of officers

June 28, Sunday, noon till 9:00 pm. Picnic and Opening of 2009 Season at River's End Park, Saugus. Picnic, Volleyball Tournament, Dancing - Dave Miron Orchestra, hot buffet, cold drinks. Free Entry. Information: Trocinski 310 305 8687 i Kozlowski 310 670 3152.

July 4, Saturday, 4:30 - 8:00 pm. Outdoor Concert Doc Rok-it and band at Clubhouse Two at Laguna Woods. Information: Irena 949-206-9122

Aug 9, Polish Day, Pope John Paul Polish Center 3999 Rose Drive in Yorba Linda. Sponsored by PNA Orange County Centennial Lodge 3193

16, noon - Memorial Mass for departed and living PAC Members, Our Lady of Bright Mount Polish Parish, 3424 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018

22, Saturday, 9:00 am - 5:00pm Polish Genealogical Society of California Seminar at Weingart Center, Lakewood: info:www.pgscsca.org

23, 10:30 am. Polish American Patriotic Anniversaries of 20th Century: World Wars I and II, Warsaw Uprising 1944, Solidarność 1980, Tribute to The Victims of Nazism and Communism. Polish Center of John Paul II, 3999 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda, CA 92886. Info: Mietek Dutkowski 714-608-0511

Sept 6, Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the beginning of WWII, The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, LA, CA, Info; Rich Widerynski 562-426-9830

Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: zbykoopet@aol.com ★