

A New Polish Star

By Bruce Bawer

Not all that long ago, Spain and Ireland and Poland were seriously Catholic countries, famous for cultures that – in comparison with most of Western Europe – seemed downright old-fashioned, and famous, too, for the severity of their laws on matters like divorce and abortion. No more. In the post-Franco era, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) has held the reins of power in Madrid longer than any other, and Spanish culture has changed accordingly. During the same period, Ireland has undergone a no less dramatic transformation.

Poland's big political metamorphosis has happened more recently. When I visited Warsaw a few years ago, it was conservative, pristine, obviously proud of its history and heritage. I've been to a lot of cities in Western Europe, but, for reasons I probably need not expatiate upon, none felt as safe as Warsaw. Like most other Eastern European countries, Poland belonged to the EU but was fiercely skeptical about its leaders' globalist agenda, their attempt to turn duly elected national governments into mere puppets, and their determination to fill Europe with Muslims who despise Western values.

Perhaps above all, I was impressed – and touched – by the Poles' staunch pro-Americanism: unlike some Europeans, the Poles, who have always had the exceedingly bad luck of being located between Germany and Russia, those two chronically aggressive powers, and who spent much of the twentieth century under the brutal heel of Nazism and Communism, have never fallen for the widely promoted delusion that it is the EU, and not NATO – with America at its head – that keeps them safe from the threat of Russian predation.

One of the earliest, best, and most enthusiastically received

speeches of Donald Trump's presidency was the one he delivered in Warsaw on July 6, 2017, in which he recalled the Poles' historic endurance, praised their wartime sacrifices, applauded them as "a nation devoted to God," and celebrated "the courage deep in the Polish character" and the Poles' undying determination to "defend our civilization." His audience cheered him incessantly, especially when he spoke bluntly about the threat of Islamic terrorism.

Alas, a very different Donald – Donald Tusk, a leftist and a globalist – became prime minister of Poland last December. Tusk, as it happens, had served as PM before – from 2007 to 2014, during which time he raised taxes and expanded the size of government. Still, in most ways, he refrained at that time from radically challenging traditional Polish values. In what may be taken as a sign of his priorities, he left the prime ministership to accept the presidency of the European Council, a job he held for five years.

After his December reelection to the Polish prime ministership, it quickly became clear that his years in Brussels had made an impact upon his political agenda. Just as one of Trump's first trips as president was to Poland, one of Tusk's first trips during his second go-round as prime minister was to an EU summit in Brussels. From the beginning, he made it clear that one of his goals this time was to ensure that Poland, which like Hungary and the Czech Republic has patriotically resisted increasing EU dominance, became a more obedient vassal of the EU honchos and the powers that be in Berlin and Paris.

Certainly European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who seems so perfectly suited to her role that one might almost believe she was put together in a lab somewhere, was thrilled with Tusk's election, eulogizing him for his "strong commitment to our European values." Reading her praise for Tusk, you can almost hear the strains of *Deutschland über alles* in the background.

After beginning his current term as prime minister, Tusk wasted no time in purging political opponents from the news media, publishing houses, cultural institutions, and members of the judiciary – a set of moves that reminded many Poles of their years under Communism. Within months of taking office, Tusk's government proposed a law that would punish "hatred based on national, ethnic, racial, religious differences or due to non-denomination, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation or sexual identity" with up to three years behind bars.

Among the offenses punishable under the proposed law would be criticism of transgender ideology. Tusk also promised to make abortion legal until the end of the first trimester. Perhaps because of these dramatic moves, Tusk suffered an electoral setback in April, when regional elections resulted in victory for his opposition, the Conservative Law and Justice Party.



That the EU-loving left hasn't entirely taken over Poland was demonstrated dramatically the other day when Ewa Zajączkowska-Hernik, a new

Polish member of the European Parliament, gave a [speech](#) in that body that made Nigel Farage in his Brussels heyday look almost like a shrinking violet. On July 18, just prior to the vote for the new head of the European Commission, Zajączkowska-Hernik directly addressed von der Leyen, who had been nominated by the European Council for a second five-year term in that post. Zajączkowska-Hernik began by saying that she was about to tell von der Leyen (who, alas, ended up being

reelected) “what the great majority of Europeans think of you.”

Von der Leyen, Zajackowska-Hernik went on to say, is “the face of the European green deal, which is destroying the European economy and agriculture...You are the face of all the EU’s climate craziness, which leads to us Europeans becoming poorer and poorer. Finally, you are the face of the migration pact...which leads millions of women and children to feel threatened on the streets of their own cities. You are responsible for every rape, for every assault, for every tragedy caused by the influx of illegal migrants, because it is you who are inviting these people here to Europe. For what you do, you should go to prison, not to the European Commission....We want a Europe of free, sovereign nations, not a sick, leftist ideology.”

Who is Ewa Zajackowska-Hernik? I’d never heard of her before. I’m glad to know about her now. She’s 34 years old, a history teacher, a former journalist, and a newly elected member of the European Parliament. She’s also, frankly, a knockout, and the name of her political party translates into New Hope. Her *j’accuse* directed at von der Leyen was apparently her maiden speech in the European Parliament. Too bad von der Leyen got reelected anyway. But three cheers for Zajackowska-Hernik’s bold truth-telling. May her comments be the first of many well-deserved attacks by this gutsy young lady on the unelected mediocrities and miscreants, von der Leyen above all, who, like Napoleon and Hitler before them, seek to turn the European continent into their own glorious empire.

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