

Dear Friends,

With Christmas and the New Year approaching, may I wish you all a relaxing and holy holiday and a profitable and peaceful 2008. *Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.*

The year 2007 started with my party, the League of Polish Families, in the coalition right wing government. The main ruling party, Law and Justice (PiS), was a difficult partner, all the time trying to dominate us, entice our MPs to move over to them, disciplining us with the threat of an earlier election, etc. It became famous for trying to find negative information about us and the other coalition partner the Self-defence through the use of eavesdropping by the secret services. All political negotiations and conversations were recorded. Many accusations were advertised without placing any formal charges. They were annoyed by our insisting that they stay with their own program as advertised before the elections. In late summer they claimed that with such unruly coalition partners they are unable to rule, served notice on the coalition, continued as minority government for a while and decided on an early election. This of course was very welcome by the opposition Civic Platform and the post-communists, so the necessary 2/3 majority was available. The Law and Justice gambled, hoping to get a majority on their own. They lost. In the Oct. 16 election the liberal Civic Platform won and formed the new government. Unfortunately my party failed to pass the 5% threshold and we are no longer represented in parliament.

My son Roman, the former Minister of Education and deputy Prime Minister, returned to his law practice, taking responsibility for the defeat. Sylwester Chruszcz, a member of the European Parliament, and deputy leader of our party, took over as the new leader. Next will be the 2009 elections to the European Parliament, and we hope to be ready for our comeback.

Our stint in government had some durable effects. We managed to introduce (against the will of the main coalition partner PiS) some pro-family benefits, one time bonuses for each baby born and the possibility to share taxation with children – as with spouses. School uniforms were introduced and both parents and schools are happy with the change. Teachers were given public employee status. Marks from religious classes (all denominations) will be included in the matriculation average when leaving school. The required literature readings in schools have been changed to reflect the traditional Polish and Catholic identity of our country. My son tried to eliminate an author who promoted homosexuality, but he was overruled by Prime Minister Kaczyński. This was one of the points of conflict within the government. There were other conflicts people will remember. We strongly fought ratification of the EU Reform Treaty while PiS wanted only an opt-out from the Charter of Fundamental Rights. We tried to eliminate abortion altogether but PiS wanted to keep the exceptions existing in the current law (when life or health of the mother is endangered, after rape, when the pre-born baby is disabled). We also had the ministry of marine affairs. Our battle with the EU for fishing quotas is well remembered by Polish fishermen. The Polish merchant fleets were given tax facilitation enabling a return to Polish flag from the flags of convenience. Ports were modernised, stimulating N-S transport, from Scandinavia to the Balkans.

This year my own activities in the European Parliament were quite visible. I wrote a booklet entitled *Civilisations at war in Europe*, which is an attempt to introduce the teaching of a Polish historian and philosopher, Feliks Koneczny, to a wider public. I distributed it to all Members of the European Parliament. It met with an uproar of criticism in the world media. I was proclaimed a racist and anti-Semite. The President of the European Parliament was bombarded with many letters from all sorts of Jewish organisations from all over the world calling him to penalise me. He succumbed and gave me an official reprimand, accusing me of xenophobia. I was refused payment for the booklet from the Parliament (from money that is mine for political activities). The reprimand gave the booklet a lot

of publicity (it can be found in English, Polish and French on my website www.giertych-pl). I appealed the reprimand to the Bureau of the parliament, asking to indicate which particular statement was xenophobic, but the Bureau unanimously reconfirmed the reprimand, claiming that numerous statements in the booklet are xenophobic, yet failing to mention even one.

On Oct. 7 during a meeting in the US of the Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue (of which I am a member) there was a session on “Civil Liberties, Anti-Discrimination, Race Hate and Anti-Semitism” where the main speaker was Abe Foxman, chairman of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). He gave an extensive overview of anti-Semitism in the world. In the discussion that followed, a US congressman, Eliot Engel, specifically mentioned my booklet as an example of anti-Semitism. I was given the opportunity to reply (something I never had in the European Parliament). I said that I listened carefully to Mr. Foxman’s lecture and tried to find in his definition of anti-Semitism something that would justify his statement (which I found on the ADL web-page) that my booklet is “racist and anti-Semitic from beginning to end”. I suggested he never read the booklet, at best the chapter of the Jewish civilisation and probably only press reports on it. I confirmed what congressman Engel said that I claim Jews make ghettos themselves. Yes indeed I did write that Jews tend to stick together. I have characterised five civilisations that have made Europe over the centuries. I do not claim that everything I wrote is correct, or that the author I quote was correct, but I see no reason why I should not be allowed to write about them. Samuel Huntington, a Harvard professor, wrote a book with a very similar title, *The clash of civilisations*, in which he describes seven civilisations existing in the world today. He relegated the Jewish civilisation to a footnote in which he claims it is territorially so insignificant that it is not worth mentioning. He misses the point. The Jewish civilisation exists for at least four thousand years, is likely to continue for a few millennia more, and its specificity is not defined by the state of Israel but by the ability to live among non-Jews and to continue maintaining a separate identity. In each generation they lose some people through integration, in some generations more and in some others less, but they struggle along. What is this specific Jewish identity? I suspect that the reason I am so attacked for this booklet is not because of what I wrote but because a non-Jew dared to try and define Jewish identity. After this explanation I distributed the booklet to the US delegation (the European side already had it earlier). Both Foxman and Engel admitted they did not read the booklet and promised to do so. Later I had some very good private conversations on the topic with several participants of the dialogue later.

In the European Parliament I produced another booklet, *European Values* (also on my web-site), in which I discuss values that should be considered as specifically European. Among them I mention freedom of speech and I quote the various examples of censorship I met with in the Parliament. These concerned a pro-life exhibit I had there, an anti-war display that mentioned German responsibility for World War II and the booklet on civilisations. This time the booklet met with total silence – a more effective way of combating my views.

Next I produced the booklet, *Teaching on evolution in European Schools* (see my web-site). This also met with silence in the European Parliament but was well received outside, particularly in the US. I also got promises that parts of it will be translated and printed in France and Sweden. I produced a Polish translation and this will also be printed. I had many requests for copies from various employees of the European Parliament, so obviously the copies I distributed to MEPs created a more general interest.

I have established my position in the European Parliament as a black sheep speaking the unspeakable against the obligatory political correctness.

With best regards to you all,

Maciej Giertych

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