
Interview: Aleksander Legatowicz

A view from Poland: LaRouche's ideas must be part of the debate



Aleksander Legatowicz is an economist and a university professor in Poland. He was a close collaborator of the late Cardinal Wyszynski, served as a deputy in the Polish Sejm (Lower House of Parliament) during the late 1980s as a representative of a Catholic faction, and was a member of the State Council. Currently, he teaches economics in the College of Management in Warsaw. He is also a signer of an Appeal to President Clinton, calling on the American President to appoint Lyndon LaRouche as an economic adviser in his administration. He was interviewed by Anna Kaczor Wei in November.

EIR: A fight is emerging in Poland, as well as in other countries, over how much influence the state should have on the economy. Behind this controversy is the worldwide fight between sovereign governments and powerful global financial interests, as represented, for example, by the big hedge funds. How do you view these developments against the background of the global crisis?

Legatowicz: I think that we here in our country, like in other countries with a similar history during the last period, face a problem of the choice of the form of the transformation. Till today, to some extent, there has been a sort of obligation to think that, after the failure of communism, we have to follow certain models, which dominate now the developed countries, western Europe and the United States. This is obligatory thinking, and anybody who breaks out from it, is attacked. But, the question is, whether uncritical following of those models is really reasonable. I think that it is very important what the Schiller Institute, and in particular Lyndon LaRouche, are saying, because he is questioning and criticizing what is going on in those countries, and in other parts of the world. In my opinion, those models, coming from the West, are not suitable for the situation and the civilizational changes which we see today.

We have growing unemployment, which the so-called market economy cannot cope with. Therefore, we need a rational intervention of state structures, not only an intervention, but an active involvement of such structures, in order to solve social problems connected with the process of transformation. Solutions proposed by the market economy are not sufficient. There is a second very important element: In this system, there are strong mechanisms which cause great disproportions in the division of the national product. Great

riches bear more riches, while poverty brings more poverty. A great number of people are pushed below the poverty line, whole countries end up below any acceptable civilizational levels, while at the same time money and all kinds of wealth are accumulated in the hands of the few. This leads to social tensions within nations, and tensions in international relations. This has not been solved in the frame of the standard market economy either.

This requires, on an international scale, not just an intervention, but an active involvement of the governments of the world.

The fourth element which we have to consider, and which is very much stressed by the Schiller Institute and LaRouche's work, is the alienation of the financial system from the productive, real economy. This is typified by the fact that more than 90% of foreign exchange is of a speculative nature, and only a very small percentage has something to do with real economic processes. One has to remember that those speculative operations do not create economic value, but rather they lead to the disintegration of productive potential. The financial system has expanded tremendously, in the same way as a sick organ in the human body, which used to play an important role, but then started to grow pathologically and live at the expense of the rest of the body. Mr. LaRouche stresses this very often in his statements. That requires a new approach, and this is why there are more and more voices calling for a New Bretton Woods agreement. This is important because the present system creates the threat of a global crisis. This is why LaRouche's message is so important, as well as the ideas promoted here by the Schiller Institute.

There is a need for a new system, but one has to keep in mind that in the present system, certain groups have gained significant privileges, so one has to expect a lot of resistance against any propositions which would challenge this privileged status. This makes the problem of making the right choice of reforms, not only in the former East bloc countries, but also globally (so-called developed countries stand before this question, too), even more difficult. Such countries as Poland should be given a certain degree of freedom to look for such solutions which are the best, from the point of view of their interests. We do not want to see a situation in which we express a wish to integrate with the developed countries but, in order to be able to do this, we have to uncritically accommodate to the rules existing there, so that we are losing

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our sovereignty, in two ways. First of all, we are not allowed to chose solutions for systemic changes, and second, we lose sovereignty when it comes to dealing with our national wealth, which in practice is taken over by the narrow group of people who represent big Western financial groups.

It is clear that in the process of integration, one has to protect the rights of the individual, of the family, but also the rights of the nation. This is why I think that the fact that the Schiller Institute stresses national sovereignty, is so important. Without protecting those rights, we'll see more and more paradoxes. For example, on one hand, farmers in western Europe cannot sell their products, and on the other, in a country like Poland, after a few years of reforms, the Polish radio announces a campaign to feed Polish children. According to the radio report, about 1 million children in Poland go to school every day without breakfast. I think that there are no objective reasons why Polish children should be forced to go without breakfast, and if they have to, it is clearly due to the failure of the economic system that has been implemented here.

So, we have to look for a new system, and, of course, we can draw upon the historical experience of those systems from the past which were successful. I think that LaRouche's economic concepts fulfill this task, because they stress the importance of physical economy, and show how the financial system has been separated from the real, productive economy in a pathological way. He also stresses the involvement of the state in infrastructure development, such as, for example, the West-East bridge [Eurasian Land-Bridge]. In other words, the state is consciously active economically, in order to use the contemporary knowledge to the greatest degree — the Schiller Institute stresses the importance of science very much — with the idea of solving the problems which we are facing now.

How to solve unemployment? We have to do it not just to give people the means to feed themselves. We have to consider that every individual can do something good, maybe with additional training and education, and this valuable quality should not be wasted. Those who are unemployed may survive on unemployment benefits, but they do not contribute anything to the economy, and this has a bad impact on their mental state; after some time, they may not be able to join in social life in a creative way. This is also the reason why those big infrastructure projects are so important.

In his analysis of the present situation, Lyndon LaRouche says that the scientific knowledge we have today, could allow us to create decent conditions of life for the human population

living today, and also for future generations. He opposes all the claims that we have to limit population growth, and stresses that science, its development, and human capabilities which are at the roots of science, can allow us, if we act rationally, to solve social problems in an appropriate way. This makes a difference between LaRouche and some other so-called experts, say, from the Club of Rome. LaRouche's ideas are also consistent with the social teaching of the [Catholic] Church; this is why they should be part of a serious conceptual discussion here in Poland. If LaRouche is right about the present crisis, we will soon see tremendous social tensions which will force the search for new solutions. We have to make sure that a general idea of a new system, like a New Bretton Woods, is developed in a very concrete way, so that in this critical situation, societies do not find themselves helpless.

EIR: In April 1995, you wrote an article on national sovereignty. What was your main argument in this paper?

Legatowicz: It is obvious that due to certain civilizational processes, various nations tend to depend on each other to a certain degree. Sometimes it is also necessary to solve social problems in an integrated way, if they concern a few countries, not just one. However, it is important to make sure that all the processes leading to a closer integration are based on moral principles of human relations. We have to decide what kind of rules must constitute the bases for such an integration. The human rights charter, formulated some years ago, was an important step. . . . The same kind of charter one could also write for the family, as a basic structure of the society.

One can also ask whether a nation, as a certain community, should have a charter of rights. On one hand, the awareness of national commonwealth is a certain humanist value which cannot be ignored in the process of integration. This value should be defined. On the other hand, if the question of national interest is not discussed properly, it may lead to negative phenomena and conflicts. The rights of nations should be defined. Political rights should be acknowledged, as well as the rights to seek independent economic solutions without outside pressure: "Only if you follow certain kind of reforms, will you get some money, perhaps," etc.

Every nation should have the right to seek the best kind of solutions on their own. Every nation should have the right to maintain economic sovereignty: the right to decide about its national wealth, instead of giving it away to supranational oligarchical structures.

In this context, I wanted to say that in my contacts with the Schiller Institute, I appreciate the fact that it proposes to return to Classical forms of culture which have certain eternal values. The institute started its work in Germany and the U.S., but it is not influenced by contemporary cultural trends. It represents certain values which pertain to all humanity, and which have survived through centuries. This cultural aspect also has a great importance. I think that this message should be treated with great attention, not as a new political religion or something like that, but it should be seriously discussed. Searching for new solutions, and this I see in the Schiller Institute very clearly, should be a part of a broad dialogue. It should not be treated with a negative attitude already beforehand, as something dangerous, a saboteur, or some institution supported by God knows who. I do not know who is behind it, but I can judge the content of ideas.

EIR: When the Holy Father was in the United States in 1995, he also expressed the idea of the “rights of nations.” Do other circles express similar sentiments in this matter?

Legatowicz: When the Pope spoke before the United Nations General Assembly in October 1995, he proposed that a charter of the rights of nations be formulated, and that those rights be respected in international relationships. Moreover, after he came back from the U.S., he referred to this charter

again, so it was not just a one-time intellectual adventure. It is important that the international press reported that and stressed it very strongly. For a long time, this was ignored. But we think that the rights of nations are being trampled on right now; we have started efforts to mobilize around this issue here in Poland, but we also we seek support internationally.

EIR: What do you think about LaRouche’s document “What Each Among All Nations Should Do Now,” and how do you think his ideas, especially in the field of economics, can be combined with your efforts here to formulate the course of nations?

Legatowicz: It is obvious that the rights of nations should include economic sovereignty, and the right to conduct independent policies, especially domestic policies. It is very important to stress that every country should have the right to shape its own internal policies. No external force should be allowed to force us to accept some, say, economic models, which may be detrimental to our economy, from our point of view. Why is this important? There is a question of progress, not only in the field of technology, but also in the area of morality and statecraft, as well as social organization of the society and progress in economy. It may occur only if one is allowed to look for new solutions. Therefore, it is not good if every new proposition is treated as utopia or something dangerous.

Right now, as LaRouche says, the crisis will escalate; we will be forced to look for new solutions. We have to be quicker than the crisis, so that we do not see a situation in which, only after a huge social cost has been paid due to wrong reforms, do we start to look for solutions.

It would be impossible now to solve only local problems in Poland. There is an interdependence among nations, and therefore we have to contribute something positive to world developments. I think that Poland, although it cannot impose anything on a large scale, can propose something in an international arena. When it comes to LaRouche’s proposals, I think, they should be seriously considered under the magnifying glass, so to speak, and analyzed point by point. LaRouche has been proposing new solutions to the growing crisis for a long time; he knows what is going on in the West and in the United States. He has been campaigning for the implementation of those solutions, and even taking risks to do that. The necessity to defend national sovereignty — in the field of politics, culture, and economy — is very important. We have the right to look around and follow some examples which we consider good, but we should not be forced to imitate anything. In the past, we had to build socialism, because that was demanded by Moscow, and now we have to build market economy, because somebody else again says so.

Therefore, I am convinced that what LaRouche proposed in the document you mentioned, is very much going in the right direction.

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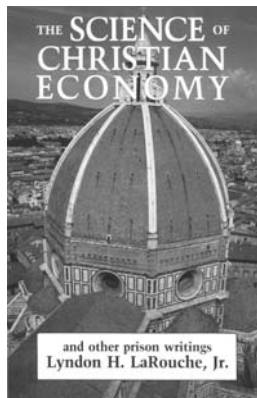
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