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POLAND – NEIGHBOR, PARTNER AND FRIEND IN THE EAST

GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONS SINCE 1989

Stephan Georg Raabe

Adam Michnik, the former campaigner and editor of the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the largest newspaper in Poland, said of the most recent Polish presidential elections, held on July 04, 2010, that he was pleased that Poland was finally rid of the "evil specter of the IVth Republic."¹ In fact, the victory of Bronisław Komorowski, the liberal-conservative candidate standing for the "Civic Platform" (*Platforma Obywatelska*, PO), over his national-conservative opponent, Jarosław Kaczyński, leader of the largest opposition party "Law and Justice" (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS), means that the political reform project of the IVth Republic has now been shelved.

THE SPECTER OF THE IVTH REPUBLIC

The radical political reforms in Poland began with the double electoral victories of the Kaczyńskis in the parliamentary and presidential elections in fall 2005, following four years of a post-communist left-wing government. At that time, the PiS was the strongest party in parliament with 27

1 | Adam Michnik: The First Republic was the Noble Republic and had the first-ever, modern constitution in Europe, signed on May 3rd, 1791. It ceased to exist after the third partition of Poland by Prussia, Austria and Russia. The Second Polish Republic covers the period in Polish history between 1918 and 1939 in the inter-war years, although, following the coup by Józef Piłsudski in May 1926, Poland was subject to authoritarian rule. Following the peaceful revolution of 1989/90, the Third Republic came into being. Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe, "Geschichte und ihre Interpretation. Zum Verfassungstag in Polen", *Country Reports of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, Poland Office from 5/4/2010; Manfred Alexander gives a good overview in *Kleine Geschichte Polens*, (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2005).

percent. A little later, Lech Kaczyński beat the leader of the PO, Donald Tusk, who had been leading for quite a while, with 54 to 46 percent in the presidential elections. In the end, contrary to popular expectation, the PiS did not form a coalition with the PO, and instead formed a minority government – later a formal alliance – with the populist, left-wing party “Self-Defense” and the populist, right-wing “League of Polish Families.”

Although the *solidarność* camp and the former communist coalition had splintered into rival groups by the end of 1989, Polish society remained, on the whole, resolute in the face of this split. It split between those who had tended to belong to the nomenclature of the old system, and those who had tended to protest with the *solidarność* against this system, as well as their descendants. This was evident in the alternating government majorities: From 1989 to 1993, initially the *solidarność* forces that were in power, then from 1997, the post-communist leftists, until 2001, when there was again a *solidarność* alliance under Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek. This was removed from power again by a left-wing majority, which itself was replaced by a majority government comprising the PO and PiS parties that had only been founded in 2001 but could trace their roots back to the *solidarność* movement. The presidency is similarly intertwined: Initially, the military dictator General Wojciech Jaruzelski took power for the communists in 1989. Only at the end of 1990 did the *solidarność* leader, Lech Wałęsa, replace him as the first freely-elected president. However, the post-communist politician, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, had already beaten him by 1995 at the age of just 41 years old. During the Communist-era, he had been responsible for the youth movement (similar to Egon Krenz in the German Democratic Republic). He was supported by Jaruzelski in the presidential elections against the *solidarność* hero, Wałęsa. Kwaśniewski was only removed from office at the end of 2005 after two terms in office, following a conservative shift led by Lech Kaczyński.

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The IVth Republic of the Kaczyński Brothers has split the country in a new way since 2005. Poland is supposed to be cleansed of its post-communist legacy and corruption as a true furor of justice. People wanted to get even with the former occupying powers of Germany and Russia just as much as the communists and those profiting from the *Wende* (Change). Since joining NATO in March 1999 and its accession to the EU in May 2004, Poland has now achieved its main foreign policy objective, namely full integration into the military and political institutions of the West. Following this, the objective was to assert Polish interests unequivocally. The buzzwords were nation and national solidarity, strong state, law and order, sovereignty, *Geschichtspolitik*, regional leadership in Central Europe and being on a level playing field with Western neighbors. Outdated ideas from the inter-war years of the national-conservative, Endecja Roman Dmowski, which aimed to create a one-people state, or his desire to see Poland function as a leading power in a "Third Europe" between Germany and Russia, or the view that politics as a means of differentiation between friend and foe with reference to the Catholic-German expert in constitutional law, Carl Schmitt, re-emerged. Whilst there was indeed sufficient cause for radical reforms, the political views and the ruthless manner, in which the re-organization (*sanacja*) and the new ambitions were to be achieved, were highly polarizing. The Kaczyńskis understood politics as a lasting battle and confrontation. In terms of domestic policy, the CBA (*Centralne Biuro Antykorupcyjne*) became an important tool. Political opponents, unwelcome critics and even members of the government were spied upon and arrested for publicity purposes, as with the released Interior Minister, Janusz Kaczmarek. There were regularly blurred images on television of masked Special Forces leading away the victims of the "purge". After just over a year, in summer 2007, the right-wing, populist government started to disintegrate as a result of deep-rooted mistrust among its members.²

The German neighbor was accused of new hegemonic pursuits, distorting history, showing contempt for Polish interest and more.

2 | Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe, *Polen – Politische Chronik 2007. Country Report* (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Poland Office, published January 28, 2008).

The Kaczyńskis and the PiS increasingly moved Poland towards the fringe in Europe and in foreign policy terms as national interests took precedence over constructive cooperation and tolerant, procedural settlement. During Germany's presidency of the EU in the first half of 2007, this type of politics reached a climax during the debate about the national voting weighting in the European Council ("square root or death"). The dispute could only be resolved at the last minute with a great deal of effort and significant political pressure. The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung pondered the situation: It is "the demon of another past era that many had thought was forgotten and whose poisonous breath suddenly wafts across Europe."³ The Kaczyńskis and their followers were highly suspicious of Germany, something which engendered a lack of understanding on the part of the Germans, who had been a reliable advocate of Poland since 1989. The German neighbor was accused of new hegemonic pursuits, distorting history, showing contempt for Polish interest and more. The intensive attempts by Angela Merkel, who became Federal Chancellor around the same time as the Kaczyńskis gained office, nevertheless to foster relations between the Polish government and Poland's president did little to help. Different factors complicated – or even blocked – vigorous cooperation and caused political relations to cool: the "Steinback complex"⁴, the dispute about commemorating the "expulsion" in Germany (or, as "political correctness" in Poland dictates, the "resettlement"), the repeated criticism that "the Germans" have managed to switch from being "the perpetrators to the victims", the unspeakable discussion about the supposed restitution claims of the so-called "Prussian Trust"⁵ and the compensation claims from Poland in response, the planned Russo-German joint venture for the Baltic Sea pipeline that circumvented

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3 | Cf. *ibid.*

4 | Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe, *Im Antlitz der Geschichte. Tiefere Ursachen und Lösungsansätze des Streits um Erika Steinbach*, Country Report (KAS, Poland Office, published March 25, 2009).

5 | Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe, Restitutionsansprüche abgewiesen. Ursache und Genese eines politischen Konfliktes, in: *Die Politische Meinung*, 11 (2008), 65-69; Stephan Georg Raabe: Die Klagen der "Preußischen Treuhänder". Zwischen politischer Hysterie und rechtlichen Fragen, in: *Die Politische Meinung*, 5 (2007) 69-73.

Poland⁶, the dispute about the European constitutional treaty and influence in the EU, as well as the discussion about the stationing of US missile defenses in Poland. Political communication was troubled and the media exaggerated this.⁷ Politically-speaking, suspicions towards Germany again gained the upper hand in Poland.⁸

In 2006, the Polish publicist Adam Krzemiński noted correctly that the "first wrathful leader of the IVth Republic" was in power in the form of Jarosław Kaczyński.⁹ For, this Republic was motivated by a type of "wrathful charge" against the IIIrd Republic and its diseases such as corruption, inefficiency, and social and historical injustice.¹⁰ It soon manifested itself as a "policy of impatience"¹¹ among the "ambitious and rebellious players," demanding law and order, recognition of those at the back both socially and historically, social justice and the assertion of national interests. The IVth Republic, but also the most recent presidential election, shows the geographical and sociological division within Poland, with the wealthier West and poorer East, the urban and rural populations, the well-educated and less well-educated, the younger and the older. These divisions can clearly be seen in all elections since 2005. While one group tends to vote for the compromising liberals or leftists, the other tends to vote for the wrath-fractions with national or populist characteristics;

6 | Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe, "Der Streit um die Ostsee-Gas-pipeline. Bedrohung oder notwendiges Versorgungsprojekt?" (*KAS Auslandsinformationen* 2/2009) 67-94.

7 | Cf. Beata Ociepka, Agnieszka Łada, Jarosław Ćwiek-Karpowicz: Die Europapolitik Warschaws und Berlins in der deutschen und polnischen Presse. Forschungsbericht ed. by Institut für Öffentliche Angelegenheiten Warschau mit Unterstützung der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Warschau 2008.

8 | Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe: Schwierige Nachbarschaft. Aktuelle Entwicklungen und Probleme in den deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen, Vortrag vor der Jahrestagung 2007 des Landesverbandes Bayern der Deutschen Vereinigung für Politische Bildung: http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/48/1/year-2008/dokument_id-12727/index.html; Stephen Raabe: Potenzielle Stabilität. Polen nach dem Ende der IV. Republik, (*KAS Auslandsinformationen* 6/2008) 27-40.

9 | Adam Krzemiński: "Tiefe Risse in der Demokratie" (*Internationale Politik* 5 / 2006) 23-29, here 24.

10 | Peter Sloterdijk: Zorn und Zeit. Politisch-psychologischer Versuch, Frankfurt/M. 2006, 61-73: *Die post-kommunistische Situation*, here 66 et seq.

11 | Sloterdijk, loc. cit. 71 et seq.

although, about half of the electorate does not usually participate in the elections.¹² However, a political culture of wrath can quickly turn to hate and poison the society.

Poland is seeking to achieve recognition, attention, equality, appreciation, and even to be “on a level playing field” relative to Germany, despite the existence of obvious – and often ritually expressed – asymmetries, inequalities and different economic standards between the two countries, as well as the unequal levels of development. The *longue durée* (Fernand Braudel), the long duration of a country’s historical experiences, has a socio-psychological impact, with proud memories of the Piast era in the Middle Ages and the Polish-Lithuanian Empire of the Early Modern Period; however, at the end of the eighteenth century, the country became the object of the partitioning powers of Russia, Prussia and Austria, disappearing from the map for 123 years and forced into cultural submission.

Just twenty-one years after its recreation in 1918, Poland again fell victim to its powerful neighbors, Germany and Soviet Russia. This time, however, it wasn’t just partitioned and occupied, but its physical existence was threatened and exploited. The

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German occupying forces humiliated the Poles as “Slavic subhumans.” Although they fought devotedly on the side of the Allies during the Second World War from underground, Poland did not receive its freedom at the end of the war, rather it passed into Soviet hands. The country, and with it, the population was pushed about ninety miles westward. The double post-war periods of the First and Second World Wars, and the struggles that went with them, only ended for Poland in 1989/90. Only then could the country finally begin the transformation and catching-up process, which was by no means easy, and start to tackle the dilemma of Polish policy.¹³

12 | Cf. country reports of the Polish Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung relating to the most recent presidential election, “Bronisław Komorowski vierter Präsident der III. Republik Polens” (7/5/2010); “Kopf an Kopf” (7/2) and particularly “Polen: Nach der Wahl ist vor der Wahl” (6/22).

13 | Cf. Władysław Bartoszewski, *Gedenken an das Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges und der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, (Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag, April 28, 1995)

This history, which has still not been dealt with fully in Poland, has shaped the national psyche and the ambivalent view of its German neighbors, whereby cautious skepticism is often accompanied by admiration, but sometimes also jealousy and envy, national pride and an inferiority complex. It would, however, be wrong to attribute the crisis moments in German-Polish political relations

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linked to the IVth Republic solely to the "wrathful charge" of the Kaczyńskis and, thus, the national-conservative shift in Polish politics in 2005. This shift only emphasized the existing tensions and turbulence that have existed for some time.

THE BIRTH OF RELATIONS AFTER 1989

Let us look back again: During the time of the Cold War, German-Polish "reconciliation" became a key to overcome ideologically-cemented, political partitions. Reconciliation refers to shared values, which link man to society. It was by no means a coincidence that the churches were pivotal in the reconciliation work. They provided the first impulses for a German-Polish dialog.¹⁴ After German reunification and Poland's triumph over the European partitioning, the process of reconciliation was continued in an effort to overcome the conflicts and differences that existed on the political and legal levels.¹⁵

The treaty between the reunified Germany and the Polish Republic of November 14, 1990 confirmed the borders that existed between the two countries and, thereby, removed

14 | Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe, "Die Kirchen als Katalysatoren der Versöhnung", in: Elżbieta Opiłowska, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, Marek Zybura (eds.), *"Das Friedenszeichen von Kreisau" and "Der Händedruck von Verdun". Wege zur deutsch-polnischen und deutsch-französischen Versöhnung und ihre Symbole im kollektiven Gedächtnis der Gesellschaften*, (p.p. Kreisau foundation of the Willy Brand Centre at the University of Wrocław and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Poland), Wrocław 2009, 53-86 (also in Polish).

15 | For the link between community of shared interests and reconciliation, cf. Witold Góralski, "The Polish-German Community of Interests. Origins – Achievements – Threats" in: Góralski (ed.), *Poland-Germany 1945-2007. From Confrontation to Cooperation and Partnership in Europe. Studies and Documents. Polish Institute of International Affairs*, Warsaw 2007, 309-354, here 339, 352 et seq.

the main problem for German-Polish relations. The subsequent treaty “concerning Good Neighborship and Friendly Cooperation” from June 17, 1991, which shall celebrate its twentieth anniversary in 2011, laid the foundations for the strategic partnership of the coming years.¹⁶ On the basis of an extensive catalog of measures, which were set down in the contract, the German-Polish relationship developed during the 1990s to become a positive “community of values and shared interests.” The democratic rule of law, democratic freedoms, social justice as part of the market economy, solidarity for peace and development were all important shared values. The common, central interests were found in overcoming the order of Yalta, creating a new, liberal system of peace and European unity.

However, as letters from the time relating to the treaty indicate, questions of citizenship and assets were expressly omitted from the Good Neighborship Treaty.¹⁷ As should become apparent, the resultant socio-political themes resulting from the war and the post-war years remained political hot potatoes. Indeed, sensitive issues such as the expulsion of the Germans were not avoided, rather were discussed frankly and sophisticatedly over time.¹⁸ In this regard, an initial high point was the two-year Polish research project entitled “The Expulsion Complex,” which helped to shelve the former differences between German and Polish historiography and contributed to de-ideologizing and removing the taboos associated with this topic in Poland.¹⁹ Later, a panel of historians, who were funded by the Foundation for German-Polish Cooperation and the Robert Bosch Stiftung, published a multi-volume series of documents from Polish archives in both German and Polish concerning the fate of Germans in the Polish sphere of influence between 1945

The remarks of the former Polish foreign minister, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, have been put into practice in politics: “Poland’s path to Europe passes through Germany.”

16 | German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and German Federal Ministry of the Interior in collaboration with the Polish Embassy (eds.): *Die deutsch-polnischen Verträge vom 14.11.1990 und 17.6.1991* (in Polish and German), Bonn, n.d. (German-Polish State treaties).

17 | German-Polish State treaties, loc. cit. 70-74, here 74.

18 | Cf. Klaus Bachmann, Jerzy Kranz (ed.), *Verlorene Heimat. Die Vertreibungsdebatte in Polen* (Bonn, 1998).

19 | Cf. Włodzimierz Borodziej, Artur Hajnicz (ed.), *Kompleks wypędzenia* (Kraków, 1998).

and 1950.²⁰ It is debatable as to what extent accounting for the expulsion complex has entered into the general and political consciousness in view of the dispute about this topic over the past few years. Without a doubt, the remarks of the former Polish foreign minister, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, have been put into practice in politics: "Poland's path to Europe passes through Germany."²¹ Germany's support for Poland's accession to Europe was an effective catalyst for the community of values shared between Poland and Germany in relation to European integration.²²

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising Federal President Roman Herzog appealed to Polish victims of the War to "forgive the Germans for what they did to them."

The highly symbolic beginning of German-Polish relations is exemplified by two speeches on historical days of remembrance and the mass of reconciliation in the Lower Silesian town of Krzyżowa on November 12, 1989, which was attended by both heads of government, Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Helmut Kohl, and who both exchanged greetings of peace. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising on August 01, 1994, Federal President Roman Herzog gave a speech in Warsaw where he appealed to Polish victims of the War to "forgive the Germans for what they did to them."²³ National groups and victims' associations heavily criticized President Lech Wałęsa for inviting Herzog and several veterans of the uprising chose not to appear at the event in protest.

A little later, on April 28, 1995, the Polish Foreign Minister Władysław Bartoszewski gave an important speech to the

20 | Cf. Włodzimierz Borodziej, Hans Lemberg (ed.), *Unsere Heimat ist uns ein fremdes Land geworden ... Die Deutschen östlich von Oder und Neiße. Dokumente aus polnischen Archiven*, Herder Institut Marburg, tome 1/2000: *Einführung, zentralstaatliche Verordnungen, Wojewodschaft Allenstein (südliches Ostpreußen)*; tome 2/2003: *Zentralpolen, Wojewodschaft Schlesien (Oberschlesien)*; tome 3/2004: *Wojewodschaft Posen, Wojewodschaft Stettin (Hinterpommern)*; tome 4/2004: *Wojewodschaft Pomerellen und Danzig (Westpreußen), Breslau (Niederschlesien)*.

21 | Cf. Alexander, *Geschichte Polens*, loc. cit. 391.

22 | Cf. Góralski, loc. cit. 330 et sqq., 343.

23 | Veröffentlichung des Bundespräsidialamtes: http://www.bundespraesident.de/Reden-und-Interviews/Reden-Roman-Herzog-,11072.12003/Ansprache-von-Bundespraesident.htm?global.back=/Reden-und-Interviews/-%2c11072%2c12/Reden-Roman-Herzog.htm%3flink%3dbpr_liste (accessed August 5, 2010).

German Federal Parliament as part of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.²⁴ It was termed “the most representative interpretation of German-Polish reconciliation, partnership and the community of shared interests,”²⁵ most notably because of its ground-breaking words: “As a people ravaged by the war, we are well acquainted with the forced resettlement, and the crimes and acts of violence associated with it. We remember that countless Germans were affected by this and that Poles were also among the perpetrators. I would like to voice it openly: We deplore the individual fates and the suffering of innocent Germans, who were affected by the consequences of the war and lost their homeland.” And he affirmatively quoted the Polish essayist Jan Józef Lipski:

**“Our neighborhood plays a pivotal role in deciding whether and when a divided Europe will come together.”
(W. Bartoszewski)**

“We have taken part in depriving millions of people from their homeland.” Bartoszewski was adamant, however, that there is a difference between victims and perpetrators and their followers in respect of the Second World War. Remembrance and historical reflection must always go hand in hand with German-Polish relations. However, this must not be the main characteristic of these relations, rather pave the way for present and future actions. “Our neighborhood plays a pivotal role in deciding whether and when a divided Europe will come together.”

Beforehand, Bartoszewski’s speech was highly controversial in Poland. Firstly, President Wałęsa had expected he would have been invited to Germany on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Since this did not happen, this provoked painful feelings of second-ratenedness in Poland. The Kohl administration had not realized that Poland saw itself as one of the victorious Allied powers, just like France. Against this backdrop, inviting Bartoszewski also served to avoid a diplomatic scandal. And secondly, Poland did not feel it had to apologize to the Germans. In May 1996, two-thirds of those asked in a survey conducted by the opinion poll research institute, CBOS, believed that there was nothing, for which

24 | Bartoszewski, *Gedenken an das Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, loc. cit.

25 | “The most representative interpretation of Polish-German reconciliation, partnership, and community of interests was made on April 28, 1995 in Bonn by Poland’s foreign minister, Władysław Bartoszewski”: Góralski, loc. cit. 342.

Poland had to ask Germany for forgiveness. Nearly half of those surveyed were not aware that Germans had been expelled.²⁶ Bartoszewski mastered the difficult situation by not asking for forgiveness, rather by empathizing with the expellees and recognized Polish shared culpability in the acts of violence and crimes associated with the forced resettlement.

AN EARLY WARNING: "RECONCILIATION GIMMICKRY OF THE FIRST ORDER"

The fact that the Germans asked for forgiveness for their war crimes and that Poland recognized its shared culpability in "stealing the homeland" of many Germans, without

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a doubt, formed an important basis for understanding and reconciliation. However, only a few days after Herzog's speech in Warsaw, Klaus Bachmann, a German correspondent in Poland, forcibly warned against "reconciliation gimmickry" between Germany and Poland.²⁷ He argued that prejudices, differences of opinion and problems that still existed would not be solved by simply covering them up with gestures, symbolic actions and pleas, but rather in frank discussions. Instead of this, however, several "germanophilic Poles and Polish-friendly Germans realized that they did like each other, but often only by embarrassingly leaving aside controversial subjects – reconciliation gimmickry of the first order." Bachmann feared that the controversies, which politicians and academics were avoiding for now, would erupt later with even greater force. He believed that German-Polish relations would be able to withstand a healthy argument, provided that this was staged honestly and fairly.

26 | Cf. Markus Mildenerger, *Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen nach 1990: Eine Werte- und Interessengemeinschaft?*, in: *Deutsch-polnische Beziehungen zehn Jahre nach der Unterzeichnung des Nachbarschaftsvertrages: Eine Werte- und Interessengemeinschaft?*, Wolf-Dieter Eberwein, Basil Kerski (eds.), Berlin 2001), 28-34, here 30 et seq., <http://bibliothek.wz-berlin.de/pdf/2001/p01-305.pdf> (accessed August 26, 2010). See also Adam Holesch, *Verpasster Neuanfang? Deutschland, Polen und die EU*, Bonn 2007, 41 et seq.

27 | Klaus Bachmann, "Versöhnungskitsch zwischen Deutschen und Polen" in: *Transodra* 8/9, S. 41-43, short summary in: *Die Tageszeitung*, published August 5, 1994.

Bachmann was not entirely wrong with his warning. After all, as the lengthy and intense row about historical memories of the expulsion showed a few years later, some of the "hot potatoes" had not cooled down. Thus, it was not just President Lech Kaczyński but also a large majority of

politicians and public voices that vehemently rejected calls for a German memorial to the expellees, as this would, allegedly, have reversed the historic roles of perpetrators and victims. At the same time, the president distanced himself from the views of Lipskis and Bartoszewski, and pointed out that their opinions were not shared by many Poles.²⁸ In so doing, Lech Kaczyński stripped German-Polish relations of the historic and moral basis for understanding and reconciliation that had been so painstakingly laid down in the 1960s. Or, was it rather the Germans with their memorial project that unseated the party truce between the histories? At any rate, from the start of the decade, German and Poles undiplomatically discovered that experiences of the war and the post-war era had "a constitutive meaning" for shared collective perceptions in politics and the media.²⁹ A strange nonsimultaneous of developments gained ground: whilst Germany historicizes memories of the expulsion in a museum-like manner and socially reflects on them in order to look towards the future, this approach was seen by the Poles as an attempt to revise history, something which was politically dangerous since it subtly calls Potsdam Agreement of 1945 into question and requires the Germans to critically re-examine history. After decades of dealing intensively with history in West Germany and, since 1989, with the communist past in all of Germany, this was seen as an anachronistic expectation by many in German politics and society.

In June 2000, a strategy paper published by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung advocated a new German-Polish partnership, as bilateral relations had declined since 1998 and needed new stimuli.

28 | Cf. both interview extracts with President Lech Kaczyński, in: Stefan Troebst (ed.), *Vertreibungsdiskurs und europäische Erinnerung* (Osnabrück 2006), 245 et sqq.

29 | Dieter Bingen, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz: Deutschland und Polen, in: Bingen, Ruchniewicz (eds.): *Country Report Poland*, (Bonn: Bundeszentrale Für politische Bildung, 2009), 649-673, here 649.

THE GOLDEN YEARS AND FIRST SIGN OF CRISIS

In the 1990s, German-Polish relations looked to be developing in a positive manner in terms of politics, economics and society. Some even described these as the “golden years.”³⁰ However, in June 2000, a strategy paper published by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung advocated a

new German-Polish partnership, as bilateral relations had declined since 1998 and needed new stimuli.³¹ Views of the strategic importance of the partnership shifted as a result of problems in politics of the day, such as difficulties in preparing for EU-ascension and disputes linked with the past. There was talk of “alienation” on the Polish side and “a lack of common visions for the future.” There was great need for action to avoid bilateral relations deteriorating further, which would be to the detriment of both sides. What had happened? The strategy paper gave the following reasons for this alienation and disappointment:

- Irritations surrounding the Resolution of the Federal Parliament from May 28, 1998 that aimed to create a bridge between German expellees and minorities.³² In this resolution, the German Federal Parliament supported the view that expulsions were unlawful and against international law, and called on the Federal Government to campaign for “the legitimate interests of those expelled from their homelands.”³³
- Polish perceptions that a new *Realpolitik* and emphasis on

30 | Ibid. 654 et sqq.

31 | Cf. Roland Freudenstein and Henning Tewes, *In die Zukunft investieren: Strategien für einen Neubeginn in der deutsch-polnischen Partnerschaft*, Warsaw branch of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, June 27, 2000; Freudenstein and Tewes: Stimmungstief zwischen Deutschland und Polen. Für eine Rückkehr zur Interessengemeinschaft, (*Internationale Politik* 2, 2000) 49-56.

32 | Cf. Deutscher Bundestag, 13. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 13/10845: Antrag der Fraktionen der CDU/CSU und FDP: “Vertriebene, Aussiedler und deutsche Minderheiten sind eine Brücke zwischen den Deutschen und ihren östlichen Nachbarn”.

33 | Cf. Góralski, loc. cit. 351; Markus Mildenerger, *Funktioniert die “Interessengemeinschaft”? Bilanz eines Jahrzehnts* (Berlin: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, published August 9, 2001), 12 et seq. <http://www.dgap.org/publikationen/view/09f3595eceaaf11da89fb8d4e2743af4daf4d.html>. (accessed August 5, 2010)

German national interests by the new red-green Federal Government in Germany was leading to alienation.

- The dispute about German cultural assets in Poland and the harsh negotiations about the compensation for former forced laborers.³⁴
- Fears and resistance towards the EU's eastward expansion in Poland and Germany.

The real reason, however, was down to what the paper called "structural asymmetries:" "In Poland, there was still a latent mistrust of Germany as a result of historical experiences; and in Germany, there was often an ignorant lack of interest in Polish interests." Both fed of each other. German interest in a partnership with Poland would

have to be clearly articulated and justified in terms of political and economic benefit.

The Iraq war in 2003 caused further alienation. A whole spiral of irritation was set in motion.

Discussion circles were recommended to

deal with European, economic and security policy, as were bilateral meetings of parliamentary committees, academic networks and the foundation of an Institute for German Studies in Poland, as well as increased cooperation in border regions. Many of these have been achieved. Nevertheless, it was not possible to prevent subsequent political kinks in the relationship.

A SPIRAL OF IRRITATION

The cover image was disgraceful. The conservative news magazine in Poland, *Wprost*, used a photomontage for the front cover of its edition in mid-September 2003 depicting the chair of the expellees' association, Erika Steinbach, wearing a black Nazi uniform riding on the back of Gerhard Schröder. Under the image were the words: "The German Trojan horse." In large letters on the left: "The Germans owe the Poles one billion dollars for the Second World War." The image represented the temporary media climax of an emotionally charged debate which Steinbach had triggered by suggesting that a "Center against Expulsion" be set up in Berlin. The fact that in spring 2003 the Iraq war – which Poland, contrary to its Western neighbors, supported along with the USA – caused further alienation between Poland and Germany as well as France meant that now a whole spiral of irritation was set in motion.

34 | Cf. Holesch, loc. cit. 64 et seq., 67-70

The "Center against Expulsion" and the restitution claims of individual expellees pursued by the "Prussian Trust" led to stormy political and media reactions at the time in Poland, where the conservatives were preparing to take power. On September 10, 2004, the Sejm unanimously passed a resolution on the "Rights of Poland to German War Repatriations and the Unlawful Claims against Poland and Polish Citizens levied by Germany." The resolution laying claim to financial compensation for the destruction and the material and immaterial losses incurred as the result of the Second World War was a spectacular political act. It ignored the fact that the war repatriations for Poland had been decided upon much earlier and that Germany was not making any claims of ownership whatsoever towards Poland. A further paradox of the resolution was that Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder had expressly declared just a short time before, in a speech on occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, that German restitution claims should have no place, that questions of ownership connected with the war should no longer be a matter for the German and Polish governments, and that

Westerwelle and the FDP vehemently blocked Steinbach's nomination out of consideration for Poland. The battle of the minds was decided.

neither the Federal Government nor any other competent political power in Germany would support individual claims to property. As a reaction to the Sejm resolution, both governments charged a group of experts with the task of trying to resolve the matter of individual restitution claims. Two experts in international law, Jan Barcz and Jochen Frowein, reached the conclusion that there was no legal basis for such claims. Nevertheless, the "Prussian Trust" continued to pursue its course of action and the nationalist right-wing parties in Poland used the opportunity to oppose relations with Germany in the name of Polish national interests. Thus, the "non-existent" legal claims continued to be fed from two sources until the European Court of Human Rights finally rejected the claims of the "Prussian Trust" a good five years later on October 07, 2008, thereby laying the matter to rest. A belated victory for the law over populism.³⁵

35 | Cf. Góralski, loc. cit. 344-348; Raabe, *Restitutionsansprüche*, loc. cit.

Meanwhile, the dispute surrounding the “Center against Expulsions” was still raging. The new liberal-conservative government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk had indeed started to reassess the situation cautiously from November 2007 onwards – a sign, at least, of skeptical tolerance. However, when Erika Steinbach, who was instrumental in pushing the project, joined the Foundation’s advisory board, the dispute escalated in spring 2009 to such an extent that the presiding officer of the Federal Parliament, Norbert Lammert, used an open letter to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the *Gazeta Wyborcza* to stand up for members of the Federal Parliament and to call for temperance in the dispute.³⁶ When the new Federal foreign minister, Guido Westerwelle, made his first official visit to Poland on October 31, 2009, and was asked by a journalist about Steinbach, he signaled that the FDP would deal with the issue in Poland’s interests as it was, after all, a “contribution towards reconciliation.”³⁷ Steinbach finally abandoned her seat on the advisory board on February 12, 2010 as Westerwelle and the FDP vehemently blocked Steinbach’s nomination out of consideration for Poland. The battle of the minds was decided – “mission completed,” as one senior representative of the Polish government noted. In Germany, the opponents of Steinbach felt just as blackmailed at the end as her supporters. The Polish government, however, welcomed the solution as good for German-Polish relations. However, the struggle, which had lasted for years, had left its mark.

A good example of failed political and corporate communication, is the Baltic Sea gas pipeline, which has been under construction since April 2010.

The spiral of irritation for German-Polish relations was still spinning even in other, unevenly weighted political fields. If the Iraq War had been a test for German-Polish relations in terms of security policy and the transatlantic partnership, the row over the European Constitutional Treaty – later the Lisbon Treaty – put bilateral relations in terms of European

36 | Cf. Raabe, *Antlitz der Geschichte*, loc. cit.; Id.: *Das gefährliche Spiel mit Erika Steinbach*, Country Report of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Polish Office from March 6, 2010 http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/48/1/year-2009/dokument_id-15878/index.html (accessed August 5, 2010); Lammert’s letter is available at: http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/48/1/year-2009/dokument_id-15909/index.html.

37 | Cf. Gerhard Gnauck: Guido Westerwelle. Deutschlands neuer Außenminister verzückt Polen, in: *Welt Online*, published November 1, 2009.

policy to the test. Both tests failed. In both cases, there were harsh conflicts, which were not just linked to "a fatal nonsimultaneousness of foreign policy cultures"³⁸ in Germany and Poland, but also political positions and the inability to balance these using the proper procedures. A further dispute that has been going on since 2005, and one which is also a good example of failed political and corporate communication, is the Baltic Sea gas pipeline, which has been under construction since April 2010 and

will join Russia with Germany and Western Europe. The project, which the Polish defense minister, Radek Sikorski, compared in 2006 to the Hitler-Stalin pact,³⁹ is seen by Polish politicians and in the Polish media as an example of contempt for Polish interests. In a rearguard action, the depth of the pipeline in front of the Szczecin Lagoon is being disputed.

PARADIGM SHIFT FROM A COMMUNITY OF SHARED INTERESTS TO A NEIGHBORSHIP OF CONFLICT

The aforementioned areas of conflict all existed well before the Kaczyński brothers started calling the political shots in Polish politics in fall 2005. With them, came that part of the *solidarność* camp, which had seen itself as the losers since 1989. In the domestic political culture struggle, which preceded the political shift, it was "not least a matter of the value of history and *Geschichtspolitik* for domestic and foreign policy."⁴⁰ Now, there was a radical change in Polish policy towards Germany beyond the existing divergences. If the Kaczyńskis had attracted attention earlier as politicians, "which played up the differences between Germany and Poland in order to make political capital," they were now explicitly distancing themselves from the process of reconciliation and saw Germany more as a rival than a partner. They did not shy away from branding those people, who had sought for years to foster understanding with Germany, as "traitors."⁴¹ This peaked

The leading politicians soon used all the areas of conflict to go on the offensive. Thus, a silly cartoon in the left-wing newspaper taz could easily start a crisis.

38 | Bingen, Ruchniewicz, loc. cit. 661.

39 | Cf. Polnischer Minister, "Pipeline-Vertrag wie Hitler-Stalin-Pakt", in: *Fokus Online*, published April 30, 2006.

40 | Bingen, Ruchniewicz, loc. cit. 666.

41 | Ibid. 665.

in the absurd accusation against the highly regarded, twice foreign minister of Poland, Władysław Bartoszewski. It was alleged that he had pursued a “policy of groveling towards Germany and the West.” Bartoszewski countered this blow in the 2007 election by saying that he categorically refused to tolerate “such intense defamation of Poland by an incompetent member of the government and an incompetent diplomatic moron (*diplomatołki*).”⁴²

Jarosław Kaczyński had already set the new tone in the parliamentary debate on the aforementioned Sejm resolution of September 10, 2004, by stating that there was a phalanx of German interests in Poland from people, who appeared to be independent experts or commentators, but actually lived off German money. He believed that reconciliation is an expression of naivety.⁴³ As a result, the rapid decline in German-Polish relations was not unexpected. The leading politicians of the IVth Republic and their published supporters soon used all the areas of conflict to go on the offensive. Thus, a silly cartoon in the left-wing newspaper *taz* from June 26, 2006, which was supposed to poke fun at the Polish president as “Poland’s new potato”, could easily start a crisis.⁴⁴ The Polish Foreign Minister demanded an apology from the German government and the President called off the Weimar Summit that was supposed to have taken place shortly after because of “stomachache,” but was still able to criticize eight former Polish foreign ministers in an open letter.⁴⁵ The “Weimar Triangle,” an instrument of dialog and

The original “community of values and shared interests” had finally turned into a “neighborship of conflict”.

42 | Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe: *Zur politischen Instrumentalisierung der Stiftung “Polnisch-Deutsche Aussöhnung”*. *The Polish government and its appointed representatives in Germany use the foundation to spread their conspiracy theories and anti-German sentiments*. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Poland Office, published October 12, 2007: http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/48/1/year-2007/dokument_id-12126/index.html. (accessed August 5, 2010)

43 | Cf. Góralski, loc. cit. 348 et seq.

44 | Cf. Stephan Georg Raabe: Stereotyp na resentmentem (Stereotype Ressentiments), in: *Wprost*, published July 30, 2006, 36-37.

45 | Cf. Gabriele Lesser, Kaczynski Affäre – Die unendliche Kartoffel. Polens Staatsanwaltschaft ermittelt noch immer in Sachen taz-Satire – ohne Rechtshilfe aus Deutschland, in: *taz.de*, published June 28, 2007: <http://www.taz.de/?id=medien&art=1304&id=497&cHash=5a01a8f4a6> (accessed August 5, 2010).

trust which had lost momentum since 1995, was not able to play an intermediary role during the crisis.⁴⁶

However, it was not just that: a number of complaints were made against Germany not just by the media but also by the government. Among these were:

- The lack of equal rights for the Poles living in Germany compared to German minorities in Poland;
- The neglect of the Polish language in Germany;
- Supposed linguistic discrimination of Polish citizens and their children in divorce cases and custody rights (according to the Polish Embassy in Berlin, this related to approximately thirty severe and eight very severe conflict cases, totalling around 0.08 percent of German-Polish marriages);⁴⁷
- State support for expellee organizations in Germany;
- Falsification of history by using terms such as "polish camps" or "camps in Poland" to describe German concentration camps.⁴⁸

These were all accompanied in domestic policy discussions by the accusation that Polish negotiators had capitulated against Germany when negotiating treaties after 1989 and that Polish affairs had not received enough attention, meaning there was a need to renegotiate the Good Neighborship Treaty and to reach an agreement on a denying all ownership claims.⁴⁹ The original "community of values and shared interests" had finally turned into a "neighborship of conflict".

The neighborhood of conflict affected public opinion, which could be seen from surveys. Sympathy of the Poles towards Germans declined from forty-four percent in 2005

46 | Concerning the Role of the Weimar Triangle cf. Holesch, 38 et sqq.

47 | Cf. Thomas Urban, Diabeł tkwi w liczbach. Problemy między Polską a Niemcami mają charakter bardziej emocjonalny, niż polityczny (The Devil is Hidden in the Numbers. Problems between Poland and Germany are more Emotional than Political), in: *Polityka.pl*, published July 16, 2010: <http://www.polityka.pl/swiat/tygodnikforum/1507334,1,polska-niemcy-nowi-prezydenci-czy-nowy-początek.read> (accessed August 5, 2010).

48 | Cf. *ibid.*

49 | Cf. Góralski, loc. cit. 350 et seq. *Zu den Kaczyńskis und Deutschland insgesamt*, Holesch, loc. cit. 114-120.

to twenty-nine percent in 2008 – a considerable drop. Also in Germany, sympathy for the Poles declined from thirty-one percent in 2000 to twenty-three percent in 2008. It is surprising that, in spite of all the conflicts, the German-Polish relationship is still valued; this indicates that opinion polls do not reflect everything in politics.

In view of the historically linked disputes, the following result is equally noteworthy: a consistent majority of fifty-one percent (2005: sixty-two percent) in Poland believed in 2008 that the Second World War had either had only a limited or no influence at all on bilateral relations.

Forty-three percent of people were of the opposite opinion (2005: thirty-four percent). In Germany, a majority of fifty-five percent believed that the war either had only a limited or no influence at all on German-Polish relations (2006: fifty-one percent). Thirty-four percent of people were of the opposite opinion (2006: thirty-six percent).⁵⁰ It fits, therefore, that Kaczyński's attempt to capitalize on the populist, instrumentalized suspicion of Germany against a backdrop of the incriminating past for domestic and foreign policy reasons should ultimately fail.

No one expected that this political swing in Poland would mean that the problems would disappear. However, there was now room to hope for a new rapprochement.

POLITICAL SHIFT IN 2007: REASSURANCE, EASING OF TENSIONS AND POLITICS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

When the IVth Republic of the Kaczyńskis was voted out in the early parliamentary elections held on October 21, 2007 and the PO became the winner,⁵¹ there was great relief in both Poland and Berlin at the political shift. The

50 | Cf. Agnieszka Fronczyk, "Deutschland und die europäische Politik in den Augen der Polen" and Agnieszka Łada, "Polen und die europäische Politik in den Augen der Deutschen" in: Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Agnieszka Łada (eds.), *Polen und Deutsche. Ihr gegenseitiges Bild und ihre Vision von Europa* (p.p. in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung), (Warsaw, 2009), 144-187 and 188-217. Agnieszka Łada, Wächst mit der Vertrautheit die Abneigung, in: *Dialog* 88 (2009) 58-61.

51 | The PO advanced very quickly. Shortly after it was founded, it achieved 12.68 percent of the vote in the 2001 elections and became the second strongest party in 2007 with 24.11 percent, behind the PiS, and largest party in 2015 with 41.52 percent.

PO put forward Donald Tusk as Prime Minister and was part of a coalition government with the Polish People's Party (PSL), led by Waldemar Pawlak, who became Deputy Prime Minister and Economics Minister. Both parties are members of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), which has made cooperation and dialog easier. Furthermore, involving the party in dialogs with the Christian Democrats in Germany meant there were good contacts. No one expected that this political swing in Poland would mean that the problems between Poland and Germany, which had come to light in past years, would disappear. However, there was now room to hope for a new rapprochement and that the difficulties would be dealt with constructively.

The Tusk administration soon managed to steer domestic and foreign politics onto a calmer course. In his first governmental statement on November 23, 2007, the new Prime Minister promised to ratify the EU Reform Treaty, to improve relations with neighbors, to revive the "Weimar

"The time for political gestures, such as those between Kohl and Mazowiecki, has ended. The time for national interest politics has come and we must defend our interests." (Donald Tusk)

Triangle," to join the Eurozone quickly and to encourage a "Polish economic miracle" through greater competition. However, he also declared that trust and normality would be the guiding principles of his government.

In the *Gazeta Wyborcza* on November 05, 2007, Tusk responded to the question of whether he would seek to open a new chapter in German-Polish reconciliation with Angela Merkel: "The time for political gestures, such as those between Kohl and Mazowiecki, has ended. The time for national interest politics has come and we must defend our interests." In an essay for the German-Polish magazine, *Dialog*, which followed on from his speech on March 29, 2007 in Berlin at a conference organized by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for the eighty-fifth birthday of Władysław Bartoszewski, he explained "the need for a new language between Germany and Poland:" "You can change the style or efficiency of foreign policy, but problems in diplomatic relations do not just disappear because the government in Warsaw or Berlin has changed." Therefore, we will not accept decisions, which cast doubt on the established, historical balance stemming from the Second World War. [...] It is just as important that plans for creating a "Center against Expulsions" are abandoned. For all these

issues, I shall search for advocates of our position."⁵² He also criticized the gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea, which strengthened "Russia's monopoly on supplying energy."

This language was by no means new. However, the shift in terminology away from a "struggle of interests" to "national interest politics" was clear. Henceforth, there was a trusting and friendly exchange dealing with the old controversies; there was good, frank dialog and the importance of good relations, which were based on the truth but which did not alter the different standpoints and historical perceptions, was confirmed.⁵³ Externally, there was little sign of an actual re-establishment of a partnership and concrete political cooperation in areas of shared interest. And if it was not possible to find mutual solutions for the main areas of dispute, in time, these were forced to the edge or became meaningless as a result of other developments, meaning that they were no longer so important. The administrations of both Merkel and Tusk have done a lot to ensure that there has been a return to good, neighborly day-to-day relations after the rifts of previous years. The atmosphere has improved significantly. However, as the Steinbach case illustrates, normality does not rule.⁵⁴

Although the atmosphere has improved significantly, there are still different views of the "expulsion" or "forced resettlement".

52 | Donald Tusk, "Was für eine Union braucht Polen, was für eine Gemeinschaft braucht Europa?", in: *Dialog*, 80/81 (2007/2008) 10-13, here 13.

53 | Cf. report on Tusk's state visit to Berlin, for example, in: Nina Mareen Spranz: Die neue Vertrautheit von Deutschland und Polen, in: *Welt online*, published December 11, 2007: http://www.welt.de/politik/article1451139/Die_neue_Vertrautheit_von_Deutschland_und_Polen.html (accessed August 5, 2010) and the article on the meeting between Merkel and Tusk in Hamburg: "Merkel und Tusk schweigen zu Steinbach", in: *Welt online*, published February 27, 2009: <http://www.welt.de/politik/article3289352/Merkel-und-Tusk-schweigen-zu-Streit-um-Steinbach.html> (accessed August 5, 2010).

54 | Cf. Kazimierz Wóycicki, Waldemar Czachur: "Polen im Gespräch mit Deutschland. Zur Spezifik des Dialogs und seinen europäischen Herausforderungen. Mit Vorworten von Gesine Schwan, Heinrich Oberreuter", Wrocław, 2009, 16: "People wanted a normal relationship, but it soon became apparent that relations were not normal." The book was published in Polish without the German commentary under the title: "Jak rozmawiać z Niemcami. O trudnościach dialogu polsko-niemieckiego i jego europejskim wyzwaniu" (How to Speak to the Germans. On the Difficulties of German-Polish Dialog ...).

There are still different views of the “expulsion” (German) or “forced resettlement” (Polish).

A PLEA FOR PARTNERSHIP

In view of the differences, it may still seem like a cry in the forest whenever both sides declare at official events that the problems are as good as gone, that relations have never been so good as now in the long and turbulent history between Germany and Poland, and that “the ‘community of share interests’ has now become a ‘partnership’ and that the leap of faith has turned into mutual trust.”⁵⁵ This diplomatic pathos gives rise to high expectations, which must be met in daily political life. It cannot replace a serious discussion in Germany, which takes seriously the bridges and disappointments, the unfulfilled wishes and, above all,

the causes of the problems.⁵⁶ However, laying most, or all, of the blame on the doorstep of the provocateurs and populists, and the media that encouraged them (in Poland this would be the national-conservatives and in Germany the expellees’ organizations⁵⁷) for causing the spiral of irritation in past years does not go far enough. Similarly, to say that

the plight is due to a lack of understanding, contempt, ignorance and a lack of respect on the part of Germans, and because of Poland’s reticence to defend its interests,⁵⁸ is also too simplistic.

Politics which strive for polarity can only be a stop-gap measure, but not a long-term goal. It is a matter of overcoming the diverging polarities through cooperation or of creating areas of cooperation by overcoming or neutralizing conflicts in a constructive manner.

55 | Address of Germany’s foreign minister Guido Westerwelle at the 14th German-Polish Forum “Deutsch-polnische Partnerschaft für Europa” in Warsaw on June 24, 2010: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2010/100624-BM-Dt-Pol-Forum.html> (accessed August 5, 2010); cf. also the report by Gerhard Gnauck on Guido Westerwelle’s visit to Warsaw: “Deutschlands neuer Außenminister verzückt Polen”, in: *Welt online*, published November 1, 2009.

56 | Wóycicki, Czachur, loc. cit. 60 believe that such speeches by German politicians “are only designed for export,” and there is no discussion in Germany about relations with Poland. Important speeches talk of a partnership but do not make any specific undertakings (66).

57 | This can be seen in Góralski, loc. cit.

58 | This can be seen in Wóycicki, Czachur, loc. cit. 137 et seq.: It is sad that “the German side is often only prepared to deal with what the Polish side says if there is serious tension. It would be much better if the German side would learn to understand Poland when it talks ironically about its weaknesses. However, the Polish side must prepare better for this

On the other hand, the difficulties and problems should not and must not be allowed to mask the opportunities. The results of the political and economic transformations in Poland have clearly been positive and, in view of the problems that had to be overcome, this achievement is remarkable. Germany is the most important strategic partner for Poland and Poland is Germany's largest trading partner in Eastern Europe, ahead of the Czech Republic and Russia. Thus, from an economic perspective, the relationship appears much more positive.⁵⁹ There is again "room for hope" in the German-Polish relationship, but politics must make this hope a reality, for example, by encouraging cooperation through the Weimar Triangle, the EU in relation to transatlantic security policy, Russia and Eastern politics, as well as in economic, cultural and social terms in the areas that were addressed in the Good Neighborhood Treaty of 1991. "The European Union, economic cooperation and increased human contact all form the framework for stable German-Polish relations."⁶⁰

It may be possible to develop a new strategic partnership from a pragmatic cooperation. A broadening dialog and cooperation multilaterally can be useful.

Germany and Poland – as direct neighbors, and because of their geographic locations, histories and size – have an important role to play in shaping European policy. However, both countries are not the hub of the world. They are embedded in a network of international connections and partnerships, such as the transatlantic relationship with the USA, the cooperation partnership with France, the modernizing partnership with Russia, the Eastern partnership with the EU, a privileged partnership with Turkey (which Germany is aiming for), or a strategic partnership with China. In light of all this, it becomes clear that concrete

and be clearer in potential conflict situations [...] Neglect and disregard (a German specialty) and fear (a Polish specialty), as well as complexes (which both sides have enough of each) only lead to misunderstandings." For the "asymmetry of respect," cf. *ibid.* 52-68, 75-84.

59 | Cf. Józef Olszyski: "Aktueller Stand der deutsch-polnischen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen", in: Witold Małachowski (Contributing editor), *Deutschland – Polen im vereinigten Europa und ihre ökonomische Verantwortung*, Warsaw 2006, 39-43; Statistisches Bundesamt: *Außenhandel. Rangfolge der Handelspartner im Außenhandel der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2009*, Wiesbaden 2010.

60 | Wóycicki, Czachur, loc. cit. 132.

cooperation with an eye towards shared goals and key problems between Germany and Poland should be preferred to divergent interests, which are difficult to balance. A conscious emphasis on different interest and continual demands inevitably lead to standoff and alienation. Thus, politics which strive for polarity can only be a stop-gap measure, but not a long-term goal. Rather, it is a matter of overcoming the diverging polarities through cooperation or of creating areas of cooperation by overcoming or neutralizing conflicts in a constructive manner. It may be possible to develop a new strategic partnership from such pragmatic cooperation.⁶¹ New methods and forms of crisis management and the widest possible network of direct contacts – including even the critical players – can be helpful in achieving this. It is time to “communicate more openly and more boldly with one another.”⁶² Equally, broadening dialog and cooperation multilaterally can be useful to overcome bilateral immobilization. To this end, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel cited John Paul II in her speech at Warsaw University on March 16, 2007: “It was God’s will that Germany and Poland should be neighbors. Therefore, it is our shared duty and responsibility to live in harmony.”⁶³ And the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, offered a suitable solution at the awards ceremony for the Charlemagne Prize in Aachen on May 13, 2010: “Europe as the norm, community as a rule, freedom and solidarity as principles. These are our signposts.”⁶⁴

61 | Cf. Kai-Olaf Lang: “Pragmatische Kooperation statt strategische Partnerschaft. Zu Stand und Perspektiven der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen,” *SWP-Aktuell* 48, October 2004; Stephan Georg Raabe: “Eine neue Agenda ist nötig. Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen nach dem politischen Wechsel in Polen”, in: *Euro Journal. Pro Management* 1/2008, 32-34 (published in Polish in the *European Calendar* of the Polish branch of Robert Schuman Stiftung January 2008): http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/48/1/year-2008/dokument_id-12938/index.html (accessed August 5, 2010); Jutta Frasch: “Dynamisierung der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen. Vorschläge für eine Vertiefung der bilateralen Zusammenarbeit”, in: *SWP-Aktuell* 34, Juli 2009.

62 | Wóycicki, Czachur, loc. cit. 16. The authors design three scenarios for the German-Polish relationship: “hidden antagonism,” “distant cooperation” and “pragmatic cooperation.”

63 | Quoted from Góralski, loc. cit. 354.

64 | Donald Tusk: Speech of thanks after being awarded the Charlemagne Prize on May 13, 2010, in: *Adalbertusforum. Zeitschrift für ostmitteleuropäische Begegnung* 6 (2010), 14-17, here 17.