

## Living on potato pie

The Polish periodical *Gazeta Wyborcza* published on Jan. 11 under the headline, "Housewife's Viewpoint," the budget of a working class family in Warsaw. The mother of the family, Anna Luba, speaks:

"My name is Anna Luba. I do not work any more and I take care of the four generations who live under my roof. My husband and my two sons are lathe operators. . . . We live modestly and the future does not look rosy. . . . Yes, prices can rise, but five or six times higher? . . . A lot of people just won't make it. . . .

"I get a pension of 59,000 zlotys. My husband [makes] . . . 502,000, including overtime. My mother lives with us. She is 80 and paralyzed. . . . She needs constant care. She gets a pension of 85,000 zlotys. Our younger son helps us a lot. He works in the Swierczewski, where he earns 600-700,000 depending on the month. Our older son and his wife have their own budget, about 500,000 zlotys. He works at the Institute of Industrial Chemistry and she is a cook at the Grand Hotel. They have a three-year-old daughter.

"We live in a two-room apartment with a kitchen. My sick mother needs one room for herself. The other six squeeze into 30 square meters. The older one is trying to get a studio apartment. . . . They told him recently that he could get an apartment in 30 years, if all goes well.

"Three-quarters of the budget goes for food. The rest pays the bills, electricity, gas, indispensable repairs. The health products I need for mother are costly—soap, bandages, cotton. We older folks don't have the means to buy clothing. . . .

"We are eating worse and worse. . . . We only eat meat on Saturday and Sunday. Sometimes on Monday, if there are leftovers from Sunday. I make soup more and more, potato pie, pancakes. I used to buy 4-5 liters of whole milk, but now I make do with 2 liters of skim milk. Butter is the only thing we still consume as we used to, 125 grams a day, no matter what the price. If only the high prices guaranteed quality—but that's not the case! The bread gets tougher all the time, and the sausage is not what it used to be! . . . My husband works 20 hours a month more than before, to improve our budget. . . . His brigade could produce more, but it does not have the wherewithal: They lack raw materials, the machines are not used, and neither are the people.

"This year will be less painful for people who have a little garden with vegetables, but we don't: We don't have any more family in the countryside.

"In my family, the future looks black, but we won't go begging. We will not go to charity. It is a question of honor. . . . As a last resort, my husband and sons will demand raises at their jobs. This year, it is possible that the workers who earn the least, will strike. . . . But what can the weakest ones do to protect themselves from hunger?"—*Joelle Rosenberg*

his program. Among his advisers, Balcerowicz had Jacek Rostowski by his side, "an economist with a Polish name and a British accent," paid for his work by a fund that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher set up.

The American "Project Democracy" coven, famed for selling arms to Khomeini's mullahs to fund the drug-running Contras in Central America, has its paws in the pottage too. This is clear from an article by Polish dissident Leszek Kolakowski in the *Journal of Democracy*, which does not shy away from demanding "even undemocratic restrictions" in order to whip through the austerity program in Poland.

The British model is explicitly the pattern for this crowd. The *Wall Street Journal* of Feb. 22 cited Rostowski with the words: "Fear can be a constructive force." The *Journal* went on: "Mr. Rostowski remembers how the British bled when Mrs. Thatcher clamped the money supply into irons, put millions on the dole, scrapped steel mills and coal mines, then privatized everything down to the water supply. States Rostowski: 'The sense of fear was omnipresent.' And Balcerowicz wants to achieve the same for Poland, but faster."

Balcerowicz himself announced his program in the Sejm (Parliament) with the words: "The Polish economy is desperately ill. An operation, deep surgery, by which the inflation that is ruining the economy can be stopped, is needed. . . . The program of fighting inflation is hard for the people. . . . [It] will lead to part of the businesses going under, local unemployment, and a generally downward trend in production. This will . . . cause an overall retrenchment in people's living standards at the beginning of the year."

But even Balcerowicz and his friends might be surprised by the "results" of their austerity program. Industrial production fell back 23% in January. The Polish economy faces a recession, as the German Institute for Economic Research states flatly in its latest report.

### Danger for all of Europe

Thirty-eight million Poles are being used—to the degree they have not already fled abroad—as guinea pigs for radical monetarist theories. But the Polish people's anger against the "bloodsuckers" in the government is growing, the patience