

Great many Poles think that everything that this government ruins can be easily repaired. Suffice to return this or other regulation, replace a person in a given office, reverse a decision.

The answer is nonetheless brief: no, it will not suffice.

We have ahead of us, many years of work, even assuming that things cannot get worse (and they will). Simple example: the rule on environment protection made it possible to fell trees en masse. The rule can be quickly amended, however, nobody will re-plant 200 year old trees, it will take 200 years for the trees to grow back. And that's if we plant them today.

What has happened and what is happening in Poland is not an ordi-

nary change of government, shifting of priorities or plainly 'change at the trough'. This is first and foremost, a collapse of the hitherto value system and purposes which guided Polish politics in the first 25 years of the free, Third Republic. This system was based on respecting the rights of the individual, self-government, they were based on the principle of tripartite separation of powers and independence of the courts of law (this being a guarantor of justice), on political compromise and on the aspirations for European integration. These values are inscribed and easily found in our Constitution. They are articulated directly as well as implicitly by the spirit of the Constitution.

Each for these tainted instruments to build its own power camp? The re-building of the institutions alone will be very difficult. For example: how to reinstate the authority of the Constitutional Tribunal, if presently, the judgments of the Tribunal are issued by the three unconstitutionally elected judges? The Tribunal functions according to the unconstitutional regulations and it is presided on by a 'chairwoman' who nominated herself in contravention of the Constitution and law, moreover, she ceded her authority on the 'unlawful' judge with the elision of the constitutionally nominated vice-chairman? Will we succeed in untangling the complexity of this matter and not be accused by the other side of breaching the law?

system were feeble. The judiciary is inefficient, health service is ailing, we fall short of the full 'social justice'. However, the fact that we are not as ideal as we would like to be, does not warrant giving up these ideals. No one had rejected the laws of the Constitution until recently. Today, this system of values is taken apart, while nationalist and religious slogans are put in the forefront, selectively and in a vulgarised form. However, more important than the values promoted by Law and Justice party (PiS) is what methods are used to reject the existing values and the costs of PiS' road to total power.

In the symbolic dimension, the ruling camp launches its frontal attack mainly against imaginary 'thieves and communists', 'traitors', immi-



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grants, EU. In practical dimension, it strikes first of all, in the heart of the rule of law, in the separation of powers, self-government and in social identity. Chaotically implemented regulations are constantly amended (these pertaining to the Constitutional Tribunal have been changed 7 times this year). Substantive arguments in public discourse are lost in the mire of slander, invectives, offensive comparisons. Public consultations are farcical (ditto educational reform). Social initiative is thwarted and arrogance of the government has reached its zenith.

The issue is deeper; even if we get rid of the party which aims to monopolise politics, who can guarantee that the next government will not re-

The only assurance of bringing back the constitutional order in Poland, is the last untarnished element of the system in Poland. This is The Constitution, which now celebrates the 20th anniversary of its inception. The rules of the Constitutions were violated several times, but the change of these rules is still outside the grasp of this government. As long as it continues to be so, there is hope and the ground to bring back the rule of law in Poland. All politicians who have committed this assault on the system of The Republic of Poland could then be held accountable. One would wish.

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