

# Poland's Bigoted Government

*The New York Times*

**June 11, 2006**

**Editorial**

Some formerly Communist countries that eagerly joined the European Union are balking at the social policies that come with democracy. They are led by the union's largest new member, Poland, which is now run by a right-wing nationalist government that seems intent on violating the rights of minority groups, beginning with an attack on gays.

The government is led by the conservative Law and Justice Party, founded by the identical twin brothers who now run Poland: Lech Kaczynski, the country's president, and his brother Jaroslaw, who leads the party. Law and Justice got its parliamentary majority by aligning itself with two dangerous fringe parties: Self-Defense, a peasant party whose leader openly admires the dictator of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko; and the League of Polish Families, an ultra-right-wing Catholic party.

Human Rights Watch reports that a League parliamentarian, Wojciech Wierzejski, accused homosexuals of running pedophile, drug-trafficking and other criminal organizations. At his urging, the state has instructed local prosecutors to investigate homosexuals for pedophilia.

President Kaczynski banned gay rights marches when he was mayor of Warsaw and members of the League's youth wing have attacked gay rights marchers. Mr. Wierzejski said that people who marched in a gay rights demonstration planned in Warsaw this weekend should be "bashed with a baton."

The problems go well beyond homophobia. The preferred broadcasting outlet of Poland's government is Radio Maryja, a Catholic radio station with millions of listeners that is openly nationalist, anti-Semitic and anti-foreigner. It has resisted admonishments from Pope Benedict to stop talking about politics. Radio Maryja's support was crucial in Lech Kaczynski's presidential campaign and Jaroslaw Kaczynski is a frequent guest on the radio station.

In late May, Poland's chief rabbi, Michael Schudrich, was punched in the chest and sprayed with what appeared to be pepper spray by a young man shouting "Poland for the Poles." President Kaczynski personally apologized to Rabbi Schudrich and condemned anti-Semitism. But the rest of the government's actions give an official wink to bigotry.

[Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company](#)