

*JOANNA KUSTOWSKA**

Szczecin

**PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION HELD IN POLAND
IN 2005 AND 2007 ACCORDING TO “THE GUARDIAN”**

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Summary

Parliamentary elections has always been arousing extreme emotions in Poland. The 2005 and 2007 elections were widely addressed in the Polish media. Furthermore, the election campaign and the final election results attracted the attention of the British press, which was reflected in a number of articles published in the United Kingdom in 2005 and 2007 respectively. The main reason behind interest that the British press had in the political situation in Poland had to do with large population of Polish emigrants residing in the UK.

The article is aimed at presenting the standpoint of one of widely-read English dailies which shapes not only the British foreign policy, but also the British public opinion, namely “The Guardian”.

Through presenting the profiles of two main political parties running for the 2005 and the 2007 elections in Poland (i.e. Civic Platform as well as Law and Justice), “The Guardian” did its best to affect the results of the vote. The articles published in the daily not only described the political parties, but were also aimed at creating the image of Poland in Great Britain. Depending on the election results, the image of Poland and Poles was subject to change.

* Uniwersytet Szczeciński, Wydział Humanistyczny, Instytut Historii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych, e-mail: jkustowska@gmail.com.

“The Guardian”, British daily dealing with political matters, devoted much of its attention to parliamentary election held in Poland in Autumn 2005 and 2007. Before taking a good look at articles published in the newspaper, it is worth presenting the profile of the daily and political preferences expressed by its journalists.

Originally “The Manchester Guardian”, “The Guardian” was first published in Manchester in 1821, and since 1961 has been coming out also in London. At the very beginning a weekly, now it is published Monday through Saturday and owned by world-famous Guardian Media Group plc., “The Guardian” boasts of being the first British daily produced entirely in colour. Having in mind the place and moment in history when it was first published, “The Guardian” is said to have liberal-democratic character, in other words to be in favour of the political programme outlined by British Labour Party.

As for parliamentary election, since 1945 “The Guardian” has been a committed supporter of Labour Party or Liberal Democrats (an exception was election held in 1951 when the daily backed the candidature of Winston Churchill). Political sympathy expressed toward liberal parties is reflected in articles published by the daily. This was also the case with press coverage of two leading Polish political parties running for election both in 2005 and 2007, namely Law and Justice (PiS) and Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland (PO).

Parliamentary election held in Poland in 2005

Autumn of 2005 was an important time for Polish internal policy since it was then that two major events took place, namely parliamentary election (to the Sejm and the Senate) as well as presidential election. The former was scheduled for 25 October 2005 and was the first election to be held after Poland had joined the European Union.

After a number of corruption scandals surrounding Social Democratic Alliance (SLD), the Poles were to decide if they wanted to give power to the then ruling party or hand it over to another political group.

Pre-election polls did not however give SLD much chance of being as successful as in 2001 when the party received 41.04% of the vote.¹

¹ Data derived from National Electoral Commission, http://wybory2001.pkw.gov.pl/sjg2_k.html.

Describing the situation in Poland prior to the election, the journalists of “The Guardian” focused mainly on presenting the profiles of two leading political parties struggling for power in Poland, namely Civic Platform (PO) as well as Law and Justice (PiS). The groups differed considerably in a number of aspects, yet the daily labelled both as right-wing parties. First articles describing the aforementioned groups were published in “The Guardian” on 14 September 2005. Before that only few references had been made about the forthcoming election, mainly in the context of Polish emigrants living in Great Britain. Comparing the number of publications on Civic Platform as well as Law and Justice, definitely more information was provided about the latter. In the first article, entitled “The twins who would take over Poland” and published on 14 September 2005,² Ian Traynor, correspondent of “The Guardian”, described the competing parties, referring mainly to Jarosław Kaczyński and Lech Kaczyński, and discussed the image of Poland to be created if the Kaczyńskis brothers won the election. Traynor presented Kaczyńskis as politicians sharing Catholic ideas and holding unfriendly attitude toward Germans, Russians, gays, communists or hooligans. He referred not only to their views and personality traits, but also described their appearance. Traynor described Jarosław Kaczyński as a short, fat and grey-haired candidate for the premiership with unfriendly facial expression. He portrayed Lech Kaczyński in a similar way, the only difference laying in a beauty mark on the cheek of the latter.

Contrary to the Kaczyńskis brothers, Traynor did not give much attention to Donald Tusk and Civic Platform (PO). He presented the leader of PO as a politician supporting right-wing views, yet more centred than those expressed by the leader of Law and Justice (PiS), hence very similar to the ones put forward by the daily. In fact, all the articles published by “The Guardian” were written in a similar tone. In his article of 12 March 2006 entitled “Homophobia seeps cross New UE”,³ Daniel McLaughlin stated that Poland was the least tolerant toward same-sex couples out of all the states that joined the European Union on 1 May 2004. He paid attention to one more problem, namely coalition that was in power in Poland at that time. According to McLaughlin, the leader of Law and Justice expressed his controversial views on numerous occasions, namely that homosexual people should not be teachers so that they could not “win young minds over”.

² I. Travor: *The twins who would take over Poland*, “The Guardian”, 14 September 2005.

³ D. McLaughlin: *Homophobia seeps cross New EU*, “The Guardian”, 14 March 2006.

To add to the picture, Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, prime minister designated by Law and Justice, claimed that homosexuality was something unnatural and hence the government should counteract presenting contrary views⁴. McLaughlin in a very subtle way (unlike other correspondents of the daily) pointed out that these politicians, who after all shall be the example of tolerance and defend minorities, intimidated, humiliated and deprived these groups of the right to work and lead a normal life.

Furthermore, "The Guardian" made several references to the movie entitled "O dwóch takich, co ukradli księżyc" [The Two Who Stole the Moon] starred by Lech Kaczyński (Jacek) and his brother Jarosław (Placek) in 1962. This was intentional and aimed at making it evident to the readers they would vote not only for a right-wing politician (who PiS's leader obviously was), but also for the boy they probably remembered from the movie. In this way, the journalists suggested that the political programme of the party would be as unrealistic as a fairy tale.

Compared to the Kaczyńskis brothers, the leader of Civic Platform, Donald Tusk, was presented as a liberal and centre-right politician in charge of the victorious party. Just as Polish titles, the daily under consideration anticipated that after winning the election Civic Platform would form coalition with Law and Justice, which was to open a new chapter in Polish politics. As expected by "The Guardian", the party led by Donald Tusk was supposed to counterbalance conservative and sometimes narrow-minded views expressed by their potential coalition partner.

In his article published on 24 September (i.e. one day before the election) and entitled "Polish right heads for election landslide", Ian Traynor wrote that since both were right-wing parties, Law and Justice and Civic Platform would eventually form a coalition. At the same time, he stressed that such an "alliance" would be very fragile.⁵ Traynor indicated that according to the pre-election polls, PiS and PO could expect 30% of the vote respectively and it was difficult to state clearly which party would be an outright winner, whereas the former ruling party, namely the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) could gain at most 5% of the vote.

As anticipated by "The Guardian", the most interesting competition in the 2005 election would take place between two major committees, namely Electoral Committee of Civic Platform and Electoral Committee of Law and Justice.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ I. Traynor: *Polish right heads for election landslide*, "The Guardian", 24 September 2005.

According to the official results published by National Electoral Commission,⁶ and to be more specific its chairman Ferdynand Rymarz, Law and Justice won 155 seats in the Sejm, whilst Civic Platform gained 133 mandates. The results of the election to the Sejm were surprising not only for Civic Platform, which according to pre-election polls was designated as a winner,⁷ but also for the journalists of “The Guardian” whose articles supported the party led by Donald Tusk. The required electoral threshold was exceeded by the following parties: the Republic of Poland Self Defense Party (56 seats), Social Democratic Alliance (55 mandates), Polish Families League (34 seats), and Polish Peasant Party (25 mandates). Two seats were gained by German Ethnic Minority which did not have to reach a 5% electoral threshold. The turnout of voters did not, however, exceed 50% and amounted to 40.57%.⁸

The results of the election to the Senate of the Republic of Poland were announced on the same day. Out of 100 mandates, 49 seats were gained by Law and Justice, 34 mandates were received by Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland, 7 seats - by Polish Families League, 3 mandates were won by the Republic of Poland Self Defense Party, 2 seats were gained by Polish Peasant Party and, last but not least, 1 seat was gained by New Senate 2005 Elector Electoral Committee. The remaining four mandates were received by independent candidates, namely Kazimierz Julian Kutz, professor Marian Milek, Maciej Plazynski, Bogdan Borusewicz.⁹

First commentaries after the parliamentary election were published by “The Guardian” on another day, i.e. on 26 September 2005. Ian Traynor, the correspondent of the daily specializing in political and historical events taking place in central Europe, in his article entitled “Poland swings to the right in general election”¹⁰ summed up the election to the Sejm and the Senate. As suggested by the title, Poland was presented as a country that since the first free election (i.e. since 1989) was not capable of selecting unanimously one party that could run the country on its own. Traynor claimed that, contrary to expectations, both

⁶ National Electoral Commission, <http://wybory2005.pkw.gov.pl/SJM/PL/WYN/M/index.htm>, 2005.

⁷ I. Traynor: *Polish right heads...*

⁸ Result of the voting, National Electoral Commission, www.wybory2005.pkw.gov.pl/SJM/PL/WYN/F/index.htm, 2005.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ I. Traynor: *Poland swings to the right in general election*, “The Guardian”, 26 September 2005.

Civic Platform and Law and Justice might be unwilling to form a coalition. Furthermore, he made a reference to the then forthcoming presidential election that, according to him, could become an opportunity for the Kaczyńskis brothers to take over two highest positions in Poland.

“The Observer”, weekly owned by Guardian Media Group, i.e. the company publishing “The Guardian”, featured the article entitled “Poland’s former child stars twin poll victory” on 25 September 2005 (Sunday), i.e. when the election was being held in Poland and hence Polish press could not publish anything because of the election silence.¹¹ The author, Daniel McLaughlin, published also in “The Guardian”. He pointed to a precedent on a European scale that might be created in Poland if the twin politicians govern the country. Contrary to Ian Traynor, who in his article “Polish right heads for election landslide”¹² of 24 September 2005 stated it was difficult to point to the outright winner of the parliamentary election, Daniel McLaughlin designated Law and Justice as a winner.

His attitude toward the Kaczyńskis brothers was not at all surprising. He expressed his contempt and called them “Kaczory” [The Ducks] (using both Polish and English counterparts). He also described them as conservative Catholics holding radical views and expressed hope that Polish people would eventually make a wise choice (in other words vote for Civic Platform).

It was Simon Tisdall, journalist of “The Guardian”, who believed in the coalition between Civic Platform and Law and Justice. In his article entitled “Suitors circle a Poland in limbo”¹³ of 27 September 2005,¹⁴ he stated that although the Poles chose Law and Justice and hence gave up on radical reforms¹⁵ proposed by Civic Platform, Jarosław Kaczyński still needed a partner with whom he and his party could co-rule.

According to Tisdall, whether or not the coalition would be formed depended on the results of presidential election for which Donald Tusk and Lech Kaczyński were to run. To prove his thesis, Tisdall cited Wojciech Kosca, Transitions Online analyst, who believed that such a coalition could not be created because of mutual

¹¹ D. McLaughlin: *Poland’s former child stars twin poll victory*, “The Guardian”, 25 September 2005.

¹² I. Traynor: *Polish right heads...*

¹³ S. Tisdall: *Suitors circle a Poland in limbo*, “The Guardian”, 27 September 2005

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ Such reforms include: a 15% flat tax, public spending cut, and entering the Euro zone.

attacks made by the electoral committees of candidates standing for the presidential election.

Scant attention was paid by “The Guardian” to Social Democratic Alliance (SLD). In the commentaries published after the election, SLD was described as a humiliated post-communist party involved in a number of political scandals and incapable of achieving similar electoral success as in 2001. In fact it was only the fifth in a row to enter the Sejm of the Republic of Poland and was outdistanced by such parties as Self Defense Party and Polish Families League. As for the remaining political groups that had received mandates in the Sejm, hardly any reference was made. Had it become evident that Law and Justice would form a coalition with one or more winning parties, “The Guardian” very briefly described the profiles of two of them, namely Self Defense Party and Polish Families League.

The article entitled “Poland’s disenchanting killed off ‘New Europe’”¹⁶ referred to discontent expressed by the British government over the results of election. Labour Party together with its leader Tony Blair hoped that Civic Platform, which according to the pre-election polls was supposed to win¹⁷, would become a new ally of the British in the European Parliament. Similar opinions about the results of election were expressed in Brussels where everyone was afraid that the newly elected Polish president and the government would seek every possible way of contravening standards and regulations implemented by the European Union in order to block the EU reforms.

The article summing up the results of both parliamentary and presidential election, entitled “Poland’s disenchanting killed off ‘New Europe’”, was published on 28 October 2005, i.e. five days after Lech Kaczyński had been elected president of the Republic of Poland. The author of the article, Jonathan Steele, did his best to explain an unprecedented situation that took place in Poland. He tried to convince his readers that the main reason why radical right-wing parties came to power was growing poverty and inequalities among particular Polish regions.

This had to do with a difficult situation faced by the Poles. In order to determine the number of the poor, “The Guardian”¹⁸ quoted data published by the World Bank according to which this group constituted 12% of the Polish population in

¹⁶ J. Steele: *Poland’s disenchanting killed off ‘New Europe’*, “The Guardian”, 28 October 2005.

¹⁷ I. Traynor: *Poland swings...*

¹⁸ According to „The Guardian”, the poor are those whose daily income does not exceed 1.25 £

2005. Hence, it came as no surprise that the Poles felt frustrated and supported Law and Justice. In his article, Steele mentioned the notion of “New Europe” construed by Donald Rumsfeld, the US Secretary of Defense in the cabinet of American president George W. Bush between 2001 and 2006. The term referred to post-communist countries situated in central and east Europe that became involved in the Iraq War after 2003 and were to bring about liberal changes there. According to the thesis formulated by Steele, “New Europe” ended when Polish society inclined toward political right, consequently putting an end to the stage of reforms initiated in 1989. Such a state of affairs was not only the journalists’ but also the British government’s concern. Steele went even further in his vision and claimed that Poland, which for the past 15 years had strove for reforming herself, stopped halfway or even had taken a step backward.

After the election and once Law and Justice had announced its candidate for the premiership, the party led by Jarosław Kaczyński attempted to form a coalition with Civic Platform, which was essential for running the country. Meanwhile, both groups conducted electoral campaigns of their candidates for the presidency. They did not, however, manage to reach an agreement. This lack of consensus had to do with personal issues (i.e. who would take over particular posts) as well as mutual accusations made by the two parties during the presidential campaign. Since they failed to create a coalition and soon Lech Kaczyński was appointed president of the Republic of Poland, minority government headed by Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz was formed on 31 October 2005. The government coalition was created in May 2006, after stabilization pact had been concluded.

Before the election and the coalition (eventually formed with the Republic of Poland Self Defense Party and Polish Families League), the politicians of Law and Justice attached profound importance to cooperation between Poland and Great Britain. It was hardly known Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, politician and physics teacher, who triumphed in the election and was appointed prime minister. One of the main goals to be accomplished by Law and Justice as part of their foreign policy was to reach an agreement with Great Britain.

One of reasons behind adopting such a stance was sympathy expressed by Polish people in the survey conducted by Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS).¹⁹

¹⁹ Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), *Sprzymierzeńcy Polski w Unii Europejskiej* [Supporters of Poland’s membership of the European Union], *Komunikat z badań* [Survey report] BS/120/2007, Warsaw, July 2007, p. 2.

They declared that Great Britain was one of major supporters of Poland in the European Union.²⁰

Parliamentary election held in Poland in 2007

On 7 September 2007, the Fifth Term of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland passed the Act on shortening the term of office of the Sejm.²¹ It was concluded by the then Marshall of the Sejm, Ludwik Dorn, and entered into force on the date of its adoption. The Act was aimed at shortening a constitutional 4-year term of office of the Sejm, shortening the term of office of the Senate, and thus holding early parliamentary election. Such a decision stemmed from the collapse of coalition among three parties, namely Law and Justice, Polish Families League, and the Republic of Poland Self Defense Party. Early election was scheduled for 21 October 2007 by the president Lech Kaczyński.

Just as in 2005, the main rivals were Civic Platform and Law and Justice. This time, however, no one considered the two parties potential coalition partners, but rather fierce opponents. Early election was to show in which political group Polish society had confidence. To be more specific, if the Poles trusted the party that had ruled for the past two years or believed in election promises made by the party led by Donald Tusk. The media became heavily involved in the electoral campaign. "The Guardian" paid close attention to the "Polish case".

Three days before the parliamentary election, Kate Connolly in her article entitled "Divide and conquer"²² presented a distorted image of Jarosław and Lech Kaczyńskis. Expressing her criticism, she was hardly complimentary when describing the physical appearance of the brothers and their personality traits. Just as other journalists of "The Guardian", to differentiate between the brothers, Connolly presented Jarosław as an old bachelor living with his mother and a cat. This image was reinforced by cat's hair on the suit of the prime minister.

President Lech Kaczyński's was presented as a man with a chubby-cheeked face and a characteristic beauty mark on one cheek. Having read these descriptions, one might get the impression that the twin brothers had little in common.

²⁰ 28% of the respondents declared that Great Britain was the main supporter of Poland's membership of the EU, followed by the Czech Republic (22%), France (19%), Lithuania (16%).

²¹ Act of 7 September 2007 on shortening the term of office of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, *Dziennik Ustaw* 2007, nr 163, poz. 1154 [Journal of Laws 2007, no. 163, item. 1154].

²² K. Connolly: *Divide and conquer*, "The Guardian", 16 October 2007.

However, to show that this was not the case, Connolly quoted Slawomir Sierakowski, journalist of “Krytyka Polityczna” [The Political Critique], who claimed that the Kaczyńskis brothers used one and the same brain.²³ In other words, he was inclined to believe they held similar views about internal and foreign policy to be pursued by the Polish government. To prove his thesis, Sierakowski quoted the Kaczyńskis’ mother, Jadwiga who when relating to their childhood said that even if they argued over something, at the end of the day one was ready to “die for” the other in line with the three musketeers motto “one for all, all for one”. Once Lech and Jarosław had taken over two highest posts in the Polish politic arena, the situation was no different. They cooperated closely with each other, made difficult and very often ineffective decisions, and were always supportive to each other. Just as journalists of “The Guardian”, while describing the leader of Law and Justice (Jarosław) and the president of the Republic of Poland (Lech), Connolly could not avoid mentioning their connections with Catholic Radio Maryja [Virgin Mary Radio]. The electorate of the Kaczyńskis was referred to as “the brigade of mohair berets”, whereas Father Tadeusz Rydzyk was presented as an influential priest who controlled not only the listeners of his radio, but also the president and the prime minister (by threatening he would not support them in the then forthcoming parliamentary election). In order to present a full picture, Connolly cited two elderly residents of Zoliborz (district of Warsaw) who represented the “core” electorate of Law and Justice party. Two men, Wladyslaw and Janek, emphasized the virtues of the Kaczyńskis brothers. They complained about Civic Platform, and blamed the Russians and Germans for Poland’s misfortune. Furthermore, they were disgusted with the fact that young people, upon whom the results of the election might depend and who according to them did not know real life, did not notice the problem. The title of the article, namely “Divide and conquer”, might be considered a hint given to Civic Platform how to deal with the domination of the Kaczyńskis brothers, namely that in order to defeat the twin politicians, Civic Platform should not let them rule together.

Civic Platform (PO), together with its leader Donald Tusk and their young electorate, represented the other extreme. According to Connolly, the majority of PO’s voters were young people living in big cities, spending their leisure time in trendy pubs and creating the positive image of Poland among their friends and acquaintances living and working abroad. As for the followers of Civic Platform (fighting

²³ Ibidem.

with narrow-minded and nationalistic Law and Justice), the former president of Poland, Lech Walesa, was her staunch supporter. Regarded a world authority, he was promoted by "The Guardian" as a statesman advising Polish people who they should vote for. Walesa's words were cited in a number of articles. He described Jarosław Kaczyński as an unworldly person incapable of using modern technologies (could not send short messages, had not opened a bank account, did not have a driving license, etc.). Connelly paid special attention to the phenomenon of brain drain and its scale for which she blamed, among other things, the policy pursued by the xenophobic Kaczyńskis brothers. Most British and Polish titles "designated" Civic Platform with her leader Donald Tusk as a triumphant party. "The Guardian" highlighted the role of Polish emigrants living in Great Britain and the fact they could have decisive influence on the results of election.

The election campaign was very brief. It began officially on 8 September (one day after the election date had been announced) and ended on 19 October (i.e. lasted less than six weeks). Needless to say, before the aforementioned date was set, the parties had taken a number of actions as part of their election campaigns, namely displayed their election posters or released their TV commercials. Furthermore, the political groups presented their campaign slogans. Civic Platform attracted her potential voters with a slogan "By żyło się lepiej. Wszystkim" [So that everyone lived a better life]. On the other hand, Law and Justice announced "Zlikwidujemy korupcję" [We will root corruption out], whereas the Republic of Poland Self Defense Party started her campaign with the following slogan: "O prawdę i godność" [For truth and dignity].

In 2007, the parliamentary election was held on Sunday (21 October). The turnout of voters was record in more than 30,000 electoral districts. According to the official statement released by National Electoral Commission, it reached 53.88%, which was the highest result in the parliamentary election held in Poland after 1989. The turnout in the 2005 election was 13.31% lower and stood at 40.57%. Carrying out further analysis, it can be noticed that the turnout of voters living in urban areas was considerably higher than the turnout of voters living in rural areas, namely 58.8% and 45.3% respectively. An interesting fact was that the highest turnout of voters was reported abroad, namely 78.26%. As for Poland, the highest turnout was the case with Mazowieckie voivodship (60.50%), whilst the lowest was reported in Swietokrzyskie voivodship (47.45%). According to the election results disclosed by National Electoral Commission, in the 6th term of the Sejm, i.e. in the years 2007–2011, the vote polled by particular parties

represented: 41.51% in the case of Civic Platform, 32.11% in the case of Law and Justice, 13.15% for Left and Democrats, and 8.91% for Polish Peasant Party. In terms of the number of mandates in the Sejm, Civic Platform gained 209 seats, whereas Law and Justice won 166 seats. Left and Democrats received 53 mandates, while Polish Peasant Party gained 31 seats. Traditionally, German Ethnic Minority gained one mandate. The remaining parties did not exceed the election threshold and did not receive any seats in the Sejm, to be more specific: Self Defence of the Republic of Poland (1.53% of the vote), Polish Families League (1.30% of the vote), Polish Labour Party (0.99% of the vote) and, last but not least, Women's Party (0.28% of the vote).

Analyzing the results of election to the Senate, it can be noticed that the main two opponents, namely Civic Platform as well as Law and Justice, gained considerable number of seats in the Senate (out of 100 mandates). As for the new term, the former gained 60 seats, whereas the latter won 39 mandates. Last but not least, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz was elected as independent senator and not a member of Left and Democrats Party.

Altogether, the number of voters amounted to 16,495,000. Civic Platform received 6.7 million votes, Law and Justice polled 5.2 million votes, Left and Democrats obtained 2.1 million votes, whereas Polish Peasant Party secured 1.4 million votes. Civic Platform won the election in northern, western and central voivodships. As usual, Law and Justice triumphed in eastern and southern voivodships. The highest number of votes (namely 534,241) were obtained by the leader of Civic Platform – Donald Tusk. Second highest result was the case with prime minister Jarosław Kaczyński (273,684 votes). Lower number of votes were gained by: the head of parliamentary club of Civic Platform Bogdan Zdrojewski (213,883 votes), Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro (164,681 votes) and his rival from Cracow – former senator of Civic Platform Jarosław Gowin (160,465 votes). Even fewer votes were gained by the vice-leader of Civic Platform Bronisław Komorowski (139,320 votes) and deputy prime minister Przemysław Gosiewski (138,405 votes). After considering the electoral protests, The Supreme Court Labour Law, Social Security and Public Affairs Chamber passed the Act of 17 January 2008 to conclude that the election was valid.

The parliamentary election held on 21 October 2007 was featured in “The Guardian”. Presenting the results, the journalists used catchy titles, for instance “The Triumph of Civic Platform”, “The Poles entered a new era of integration with Europe”, “More Tolerance and Freedom in Poland”, “The Poles rejected

populism and fear” – to name only some commentaries provided by the British daily which, just as before the election, expressed its support for Civic Platform.

In the Monday issue of the daily, Mark Tran joyfully reported that Civic Platform, i.e. the party for which the development of European cooperation was a point of honour, had won the election in Poland.²⁴ According to Tran, the importance of Poland in Europe would increase thanks to enthusiastic approach held by the leader of Civic Platform toward closer integration with the EU structures and his friendly approach toward European, and particularly German, politicians. Furthermore, he claimed that the results of election would enhance the image of Polish government as a team of politicians with whom everyone (not only the British) would find it easier to cooperate. Tran believed that the EU leaders were in favour of the choice made by the Poles and hoped for more effective cooperation with Donald Tusk than with Jarosław Kaczyński, especially having in mind “aggressive nationalism and the manufacturing of enemies at home and abroad” which was the case with the latter.²⁵ The Germans and Russians were the most satisfied with such a change since it was a chance for improving the relations between the European Union and Russia. According to Tran, the only country which could be discontent with the results of election in Poland were the USA. Such a state of affairs stemmed from pre-election promises made by Donald Tusk, namely that once his party had won, they would put an end to Polish mission in Iraq and Polish soldiers would finally return home.

The election victory of Civic Platform improved considerably the image of Polish society. “The Guardian” changed significantly its approach to young Polish people who overcame their lethargy, took the fate of their homeland in their hands and voted for Civic Platform. This had also translated into higher turnout of voters which rose by 15% in comparison with the 2005 election.²⁶ Furthermore, Tran noticed that the electorate of Law and Justice, i.e. elderly people, could feel frustrated and find it hard to live in a new reality. Formulating his policy, Jarosław Kaczyński highlighted the risk which, according to him, Russia posed to Poland. This policy, based on envy and hostility, was familiar and acceptable to the Poles who remembered communist times. To prove his words, Tran presented opinions

²⁴ M. Tran: *Polish winners pledge pro-EU Shift*, “The Guardian”, 22 October 2007.

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ T.G. Ash: *If our political parties did not exist, would we ever need to invent them?*, “The Guardian”, 25 October 2007.

expressed by young generation who voted in order to “save Poland” from Law and Justice.

On 21 October 2007 (Sunday), when election silence was to be observed in Poland and thus political parties could not turn to public agitation, “The Guardian” disclosed on its website information gathered by Daniel McLaughlin, the daily’s correspondent in Wrocław.²⁷ Contrary to his colleagues, in the article entitled “Twins fear the verdict of angry youth” McLaughlin described the situation in Poland using short statements made by young Poles living in Wrocław.

One more article looking at the parliamentary election in Poland, entitled “Separating the terrible twins”,²⁸ was published on 22 October 2007. Analogically to views expressed by Mark Tran,²⁹ it stated that “Polish democracy grew up on Sunday, when the country’s voters rejected the strident, xenophobic nationalism of Jarosław Kaczyński”.³⁰ Nevertheless, apart from a number of positive aspects and benefits accruing from the choice made by Polish people, this time “The Guardian” also noticed problems that might be faced by the newly formed government. President Lech Kaczyński’s attitude would be first and major obstacle for liberal conservatives (how “The Guardian” called Civic Platform) to exercising unlimited power. The daily emphasized that it was Jarosław Kaczyński, and not his brother, who had lost the election. In other words, the leader of Law and Justice had to say goodbye to the premiership, while his younger brother, Lech, kept the presidential seat. As expected, this posed a number of problems and gave rise to conflicts between two most important persons running the country, which might have a detrimental effect on the situation in Poland. After all, presidential veto and blocking the Acts passed by the Polish parliament would be of no use for facilitating the functioning of political apparatus. It soon turned out that this was the case. The other obstacle to be overcome by the new government was the image of Poland created by the Kaczyńskis brothers through their policy. Needless to say, this image would not change overnight. An important task to be accomplished by Civic Platform was to blot out politicians’ (particularly European ones) memories of the past two years of Law and Justice ruling. According to “The Guardian”, German politicians would find it particularly difficult to forget that the country which they wholeheartedly supported in aspiring to the European Union and in

²⁷ D. McLaughlin: *Twins fear the verdict of angry youth*, „The Guardian”, 21 October 2007.

²⁸ *Separating the terrible twins*, “The Guardian”, 23 October 2007.

²⁹ M. Tran: *Polish winners...*

³⁰ *Separating the terrible twins...*

negotiating the European Community budget for the years 2007–2013, over the past two years was a troublesome neighbour, and the relations between the two states [Germany and Poland] were affected by painful history and mutual accusations. Similar situation was the case with relations between Poland and Russia which, according to the daily, resulted in imposing a ban on the import of Polish meat. Embargo on imports should be considered a political decision.

Apart from a number of commentaries on “terrible twins” and positive opinions concerning liberal conservatives, i.e. Civic Platform, “The Guardian” also mentioned reasons behind the loss experienced by Law and Justice, namely that it was no longer the largest party in the Sejm. Furthermore, Polish Families League and the Republic of Poland Self Defense did not exceed the required election threshold. Such a state of affairs probably stemmed from the fact that Polish society was fed up with wheeling and dealing as well as political scandals surrounding the government. Secondly, as a member of the North Atlantic Alliance and the EU Member State, the Poles, according to Timothy Garton Ash,³¹ felt safe for the first time since 1989. Needless to say, the political parties that had ruled Poland for the past two years (between 2005 and 2007) deprived Poles of such a feeling. Although Law and Justice party announced the creation of the 4th Republic of Poland that would combat corruption and “the system” and make Poland powerful and independent, it failed to fulfil its election promises. Similar opinion was expressed by Ian Traynor in his article “Poland rejects populism and xenophobia in favour of pro-Europe liberal conservatives”.³² According to “The Guardian”, Civic Platform was to create a coalition with Polish Peasant Party. This would give them altogether 240 seats out of 460 mandates in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland and hence enable to form majority government. The journalists of the daily expressed their sincere regret that the two parties had not gained 60% of the vote, which would allow to override the president’s (Lech Kaczyński) veto.³³

It is also worth mentioning the turnout of Polish voters living in the United Kingdom in the 2007 parliamentary election and the role ascribed by “The Guardian” to this group of electors. When Poland joined the European Union in 2004, Great Britain did not adopt a transitional period for new EU Member States due to which the number of Poles residing in the United Kingdom increased

³¹ T.G. Ash: *If our political...*

³² I. Traynor: *Poland rejects populism and xenophobia in favor of pro-Europe liberal conservatives*, “The Guardian”, 23 October 2007.

³³ *Ibidem*.

significantly. In September 2005, i.e. when the parliamentary election was held in Poland, the number of Poles was not extremely high. However, in 2007 it was estimated that about one million of Polish emigrants (including seasonal workers) lived in Great Britain.³⁴

Most of them were entitled to go to the polls and hence, according to British and Polish journalists, their votes could determine the results of parliamentary election. Contrary to the 2005 election, politicians took active part in “struggle for winning the votes of Poles living abroad”. On 29 September 2007, “The Guardian” published a commentary by Helen Pidd under obvious title: “Britain becomes battleground in Polish election”. In her in-depth article, she presented the profiles of both candidates for the premiership as well as discussed the purpose of the visit undertaken by Donald Tusk to the UK. As highlighted by Pidd, most Polish emigrants living in Great Britain were going to vote for Civic Platform, just because they were not led by Jarosław Kaczyński. What deserves attention are last words of Pidd’s article in which she claimed that contrary to expectations, it might turn out that politicians as well as British and Polish press miscalculated the number of Poles who would go to the polls (Pidd stressed that only 6000 electors voted in 2005 in the UK).

Conducting his electoral campaign, the leader of Civic Platform planned to visit Great Britain to convince Polish emigrants to vote for his party. It should be emphasized that it is not embedded in the Polish culture to organize mass election rallies “in American style” during which the audience chants the name of a candidate. At the weekend between 28 and 29 September 2007, Donald Tusk travelled to Great Britain on cheap flight during which he met Polish emigrants. He spoke to several Polish families who worked in the UK, visited supermarket employing Polish people and took part in the Polish festival. During his campaign, Donald Tusk, accompanied by Radosław Sikorski, arranged a series of meetings with young people to present his programme known as “Return home”. The leader of Civic Platform unveiled his plans to Polish journalists: “I will ask them for support but most of all I want to talk to them about reasons behind their emigration and what could be done to convince them to return to Poland”.³⁵ In a meeting with Polish emigrants arranged in Polish Community Cultural Centre in Hammersmith,

³⁴ H. Pidd: *Britain becomes battleground in Polish election*, „The Guardian”, 29 September 2007.

³⁵ *Tusk zabiega o głosy w Wielkiej Brytanii i Irlandii* [Tusk canvassing in Great Britain and Ireland], “Wprost” [Bluntly], 24 September 2007.

Donald Tusk took the floor: “I would make a fool of myself if I told Poles living in London: Listen, you should go back to Poland. What for? I could not offer them as well-paid jobs as they have in London. Why should appeals made by politicians be answered? I have to organize things in Poland to convince them [Polish emigrants] to return to Poland in a year, five years, or so. I want to make them believe they can live and work in Poland because they will not come back unless not only prices, but also salaries reach “western standards”.

On 21 October 2007, i.e. on the election day, Polish media broadcasted news about Polish people living in Great Britain and waiting in long queues to vote in the parliamentary election. In the 14th issue of *Biuletyn Migracyjny* [Migration Bulletin] published by the University of Warsaw, article was published about Polish emigrants and the effect they may exert on the results of election in Poland. Unlike during the 2005 parliamentary election when only 35,611 Polish emigrants casted their votes, in 2007 the total of 205 election districts were established in 93 countries, 20 of which in Great Britain. For the sake of comparison, 21 election districts were established in the United States, which proved that the number of Polish electors living in Great Britain was great and they exerted a profound effect on the results of election. As anticipated both by British and Polish media, Polish emigrants, and particularly those living in Great Britain, had a major effect on the final results of election.

After the official results of parliamentary election had been announced, it turned out that journalists and researchers were right to claim that the number of Poles voting abroad would increase (146,812 valid votes were casted).³⁶

According to National Electoral Commission, the majority of Polish emigrants living in Great Britain voted for Civic Platform (74.5%). For the sake of comparison, situation was opposite in the United States. Polish community living in the USA backed Law and Justice (66.14%). According to *Biuletyn Migracyjny* [Migration Bulletin],³⁷ Polish emigrants did not however have the final say in the election since their turnout was symbolic. “The simulation indicated that regardless whether or not votes casted by emigrants were taken into account, in electoral district nr 19 (Poles living abroad had the right to vote for Warsaw’s district deputy candidate list) the distribution of mandates was similar: 11 mandates

³⁶ Migration Bulletin, University of Warsaw, November 2007, p. 4.

³⁷ Ibidem.

for Civic Platform, 6 mandates for Law and Justice, and 2 mandates for Left and Democrats”.³⁸

According to “The Guardian”, Polish electors living in Great Britain and Ireland had one thing in common, namely they had a rational and less hysterical approach to the parliamentary election than their compatriots in Poland.³⁹ For a few days after the election the daily under discussion had published commentaries announcing return to democracy in Poland. What is worth noticing is the fact that the articles published in “The Guardian” neither backed the party led by Jarosław Kaczyński, nor expressed positive opinions about Law and Justice. “The Guardian” expressed its unequivocal support for Civic Platform and hoped that new standards would be introduced to Polish politics.

OCENA WYBORÓW PARLAMENTARNYCH W POLSCE W LATACH 2005 I 2007 PRZEZ BRYTYJSKI DZIENNIK „THE GUARDIAN”

Streszczenie

Wybory parlamentarne w Polsce budzą duże emocje. Wybory w 2005 i 2007 roku były szeroko opisywane przez polskie media. Kampanią wyborczą oraz ostatecznym rezultatem wyborów zainteresowały się także brytyjskie media. Zainteresowanie to znalazło odzwierciedlenie w artykułach prasowych, które ukazywały się w 2005 i 2007 w Zjednoczonym Królestwie. Głównym czynnikiem, dla którego prasa w Wielkiej Brytanii zainteresowała się sytuacją polityczną w Polsce była duża liczba emigrantów z Rzeczypospolitej przebywająca na terenie Wysp.

Artykuł ma na celu przedstawienie stanowiska jednego z najważniejszych angielskich dzienników, który kreuje nie tylko brytyjską politykę zagraniczną ale także wpływa na opinię mieszkańców Wielkiej Brytanii – gazety “The Guardian”.

„The Guardian” poprzez zaprezentowanie dwóch odmiennych wizerunków głównych partii politycznych w Polsce – które miały zmierzyć się w wyborach w 2005 i 2007 roku – Platformy Obywatelskiej i Prawa i Sprawiedliwości, starał się wpłynąć na wynik głosowania. Artykuły prasowe, które ukazywały się na łamach publikatora opisywały nie tylko partie polityczne, ale także miały na celu wykreowanie wizerunku Polski na Wyspach. W zależności od wyniku głosowania obraz Polski i Polaków ulegał diametralnej zmianie.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ *Separating the terrible twins...*