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**CONTEMPORARY POLISH DIASPORA IN THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS ATTITUDE
TOWARDS POLITICS**

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Diasporas (scattered people who live outside mother countries) in the world pay attention to the phenomenon of race and ethnic politization. Especially, participation of the diasporas in political life of the country of settlement or role of diasporas in creation of foreign policy in the country of emigration as well as an country of immigration as a objects of research are investigated (among others creation of political lobbies, e.g. Jewish Diaspora in the United States)¹. The increasing political importance of the diasporas, both in immigration and emigration

¹ See more: R. Koslowski, *International Migration and the Globalization of Domestic Politics: A Conceptual Framework*, in: *International Migration and The Globalization of Domestic Politics*, R. Koslowski (ed.), London–New York 2005; Y. Shain, A. Barth, *Diasporas and International Relations Theory*, “International Organization” 2003, Vol. 57, No. 3, pp. 449–479; M.P. Laguerre, *Diaspora, Politics, and Globalization*, New York 2006.

countries is indicated.² The problem is very complex, especially in multi-racial and ethnic societies

The diasporas are treated as a separate actors of international relations. They are regarded as a most powerful factor in creating transnational policy³ and as a part of globalization processes (e.g. Robin Cohen, *Diasporas in the age of globalization*).⁴

During last decades the Diasporas issues became more and more frequently in the scope of political scientists and particularly experts of international relations in above mentioned research dimension.⁵

But participation of the Polish Diaspora in politics, both in Poland and countries of settlement is very neglected area of research. Mostly, the Polish Diaspora was and is treated as autarkic community and such research's perspective dominated. The problem is not only almost unknown but also important because of the fact that nowadays outside Poland live about 25–20 million of Poles what means that almost about one second of Polish nation live in the Diaspora.

POLISH DIASPORA IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA – GENERAL VIEW

The largest Polish Diaspora community – which is very specific – on the African Continent exists in the Republic of South Africa. It is about 10.000–30.000 strong with an downwards tendency.⁶ The community is also South Africa's largest among ethnic minorities from Central and

² P. Vertovec, *The Political Importance of Diasporas*, Migration Policy Institute 2005, <http://www.migration.information.org>.

³ Y. Shain, *Kinship and Diasporas in International Affairs*, Ann Arbor 2007, passim.

⁴ R. Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, Seattle 1997, pp. 155–176.

⁵ *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*, G. Sheffer (ed.), New York 1986; *Encyclopedia of Diasporas. Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, M. Ember, C.R. Ember, I. Skoggard (eds.), Vol. 1, New York 2005.

⁶ A. Żukowski, *Diaspora polska w Republice Południowej Afryki w warunkach współczesnej unifikacji i dywersyfikacji świata*, Olsztyn 2008, p. 112. According to the Polish Embassy in Pretoria about 20.000 Polish citizens stayed in 2008 in the RSA and about 10.000 were of Polish origin (on the basis of application of confirmation of Polish

Eastern Europe. The origin of the community goes back to the second half of the 17th century.⁷ However, especially emigration during and after the Second World War, is the only which provided the seed of the contemporary Polish Diaspora in South Africa.

The prevailing majority of the Polish community focuses in industrial and metropolitan areas. It is estimated that about 60% of them live in the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Area and the second centre of the Polish Diaspora is Cape Town and others live in Pretoria, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Port Elizabeth. Because of the emigration of the 1980's, Polish emigrants created new centres in the Vaal Triangle industrial district (Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging, Sasolburg) and in cities situated east-south of Johannesburg (Secunda, Evander, Ermelo, Leandra) and west-south of Johannesburg (Westonaria, Carltonville and Lenasia).

The Polish Diaspora as a group has attained a relatively high social and professional position in South Africa. They occupy middle rungs of the white ethnic social stratification ladder. In the last decades the Polish Diaspora in South Africa has confirmed a high standing in recognition of its professional qualifications. Most of its members represent technical professions. Others work as medical and governmental personnel or are owners of small enterprises. They occupy high posts in mining, chemical, computer and electrical companies.

The Polish Diaspora represents a high level of education. It refers to those who emigrated to South Africa during the last decades and also to those who were born in South Africa. At least they have a secondary education. Very frequent among them are university degrees.

In the main concentrations of Polish immigrants, since the end of the 1940's, Polish associations were founded, with the object of furthering the knowledge of the Polish language, culture and tradition among newcomers and providing them with social and professional assistance.

The Polish associations became particularly active mostly during the celebration of Polish (more rarely South African) independence anniver-

citizenship), see: Letter of Marian Bark, counselor of the Polish Embassy in Pretoria, to the author of article from 25.11.2002, Pretoria.

⁷ A. Żukowski, *Polish relations with and settlement in South Africa (circa 1500–1835)*, "Historia" (Pretoria) May 1992, No. 37(1), pp. 1–8.

saries and the Roman Catholic Church holidays. The most important and prestigious ceremony for the community still remains the celebration of the anniversary of the anti-Nazi Warsaw Uprising of 1944.

POLISH DIASPORA AND SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS (apartheid period and process of transition)

During the apartheid period the engagement of members of the Polish Diaspora in South Africa's political life was marginal. South African politics was dominated mostly by Afrikaners, to a lesser degree by whites of British and Jewish origin. The Polish Diaspora in South Africa concentrated rather on its own social and professional advancement. But such absence on political *niveau* did not mean the lack of interests in South African politics. Modest political actions were constituted only by associations of the Polish Diaspora.

The members of Polish Diaspora and especially their associations were very loyal to the South African apartheid authorities. In principle they accepted basic assumptions of interior policy – apartheid – officially called *separate development policy*. Manifestation of this acceptance was active participation of the Polish Diaspora associations in celebrations of official holidays, e.g. in Jan van Riebeeck Day, Founders' Day, Settlers' Day, Remembrance Day, Republic Day, Garden Party in Pretoria, or in activity of the *South African Cultural Academy*. On the occasion of the Republic Day associations of the Polish Diaspora sent special greetings to the South African Prime Minister or President. In the 1980's they collected money for special support fund for South African Army Forces fighting in Namibia (Poles as citizens of the RSA served there).

The same negative attitude to the Communism and Communist states had the big influence on relations between associations of the Polish Diaspora and South African authorities.⁸ The aims and activity of the

⁸ The associations univocally protested against Communism rules in Poland and rest of the Central Europe. I.e. Statement of the Polish Settlers Association in Johannesburg in 1949, see: *Z życia Polonii południowoafrykańskiej*, „Polonia Zagraniczna” 1.11.1949, No. 69, p. 10.

associations met with approval of the authorities. The Council of Poles in Southern Africa was treated as a representative body of the Polish Diaspora in the RSA and was invited to consult immigration matters. The representative of the South African authorities (among others ministers and mayors) were invited to take part in Polish events organised by the associations.

Officially positive attitude towards the Polish Diaspora was expressed in the end of the 1980's by South African Ministry of Foreign Affairs Roelof „Pik” Botha.⁹

Sporadically the Polish Diaspora was used fulfilling the aims of South African foreign policy. In the middle of the 1980's The Council of Poles in Southern Africa with discreet support of the South African Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been lobbying among the Polish Diaspora in the United States and Canada for supporting official policy of the government in Pretoria and standing against boycotting the RSA and imposing sanctions against this state.¹⁰

The Polish Diaspora did not actively take part in maintaining apartheid and as a group did not work in the oppression apparatus of the state.¹¹ But in relatively numerous foreign and Polish publications it was stated that Poles are the greatest enthusiasts of apartheid or that Polish professional speciality was working in South African criminal police. Not only opinions of activists of the Polish Diaspora but my field research do not confirm such statements.¹²

⁹ Wywiad z Ministrem Spraw Zagranicznych RPA Pikiem Botha (rozmawiał W. Krzyżanowski), „Przegląd Tygodniowy” 19.03.1989, No. 12, p. 11.

¹⁰ Archives of the Polish Association in Johannesburg: Sprawozdanie prezesa zarządu Zjednoczenia Polskiego za okres kwiecień 1987 – kwiecień 1988; Letter of E. de Virion to P.G.J. Koornhof from 28.09.1986; Letter of E. de Virion to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of South Africa from 31.10.1986; List Otwarty do Kongresu Polonii Amerykańskiej od Rady Polonii Afryka Południe; *Poles ask countrymen in US to lobby for SA*, „The Citizen” 13.09.1985.

¹¹ A. Żukowski, *Po zabójstwie Haniego. Polonia w RPA*, „Tygodnik Powszechny” 20.06.1993, No. 25, p. 4; *RPA po zabójstwie Chrisa Haniego. Strajki, wiece, nabożeństwa*, „Rzeczpospolita” 16.04.1993, No. 89.

¹² The Chairman of the Council of Poles in Southern Africa Edward de Virion stated that Poles were not engaged in any action against Africans and did not work in the

Such statements began to intensify particularly after the political assassination of Chris Hani,¹³ Secretary General of the South African Communist Party, one of the leaders of the African National Congress, commander in chief of the military wing of the ANC – *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, and probably the successor of Nelson Mandela. In this case, a Polish emigrant, Jan Waluś was arrested on 10th April 1993.¹⁴ The majority of associations of the Polish Diaspora condemned the assassination of Ch. Hani.¹⁵ The other associations did not make any statements regarding themselves as apolitical.

After the assassination in cities and factories with strong political support for Afrikaner, right wings parties Polish emigrants met with sympathy but soon in whole South Africa the attitude towards the Polish Diaspora began to be more restraint. The attitude have been changed, especially of black population (Africans) when the South African and Western mass media started to underline the Polish nationality of J. Waluś and his anti-communist and racists statements.¹⁶

South African Police. See: *Polacy nie biją Murzynów. Z Edwardem de Virion – prezesem Rady Polonii Republiki Południowej Afryki i Zimbabwe rozmawiał Andrzej Studziński*, „Prawo i Życie” 1989, No. 44; W. Krzyżanowski, *W złotym piekle*, „Przegląd Tygodniowy” 16.04.1989, No. 16, p. 10. The author of the article found one mention on Polish Jew who worked in the South African Police (see: A. Galewski, *RPA – piekło czy raj*, Tczew 1995, p. 29) and also ascertained that one Pole worked in police Dog Unit in Durban. It should be added that non South African or Western scientific institutions did not conduct research on above mentioned topics.

¹³ G. Bębnik, *Ostatnia walka Afrykanerów*, Biała Podlaska 2004, p. 220.

¹⁴ J. Waluś during assassination of Ch. Hani did not possess valid Polish passport (he emigrated to South Africa in 1981) and therefore in the beginning did not have consular care from the Polish Embassy in Pretoria, See: *Obawy Polaków w RPA*, „Trybuna” 19.04.1993, No. 90, p. 2.

¹⁵ E.g. The Polish Association from Johannesburg sent special condolence to spread by the South African Press Association, and the Polish Association in Natal condoled of Ch. Hani’s family and all citizens of South Africa. See: I. Wójcik, *Cztery strzały w Boksburgu* [Boksburgu – A.Ż], „Polityka” 24.04.1993, No. 17; B. Keller, *Old Fear Haunts Poles in South Africa*, “The New York Times” 14.04.1993; *Natal Polish group calls for peace and condemns Hani’s killing*, “The Daily News” 19.04.1993.

¹⁶ E.g. “*Kommunistiese*” SA vir Walus ‘n neerlaag, “Rapport” 08.05.1994, p. 3; *Walus was among wave of immigrants from Poland*, “The Citizen” 14.04.1994, p. 4; „Gazeta Wyborcza” 05.05.1994, No. 103, p. 6.

The negative attitude towards the Polish Diaspora was manifested by hostile inscription on walls and telephone calls or face to face threats which concerned mainly Polish doctors from Port Elizabeth, East London and from hospitals in Bantustan Transkei.¹⁷ There were not fear of psychosis but rather anxiety and uncertainty for the future.¹⁸ Because of such tense situation the Polish Ambassador in Pretoria asked for talks with leader of the ANC N. Mandela¹⁹ and the Polish Diaspora called off some celebrations, e.g. 50th anniversary of the Polish Orphanage in Oudtshoorn and congress of Polish doctors in the RSA.

After the assassination of Ch. Hani vision of bloody revolution was relatively high. The level of security among the Polish Diaspora as well as among other whites in South Africa declined largely. Since the assassination the massive exodus of whites from the RSA began but official statistics did not confirm such migration.²⁰ The own stake in the exodus had the Polish Diaspora (according to estimates of the Polish Embassy in Pretoria in the years 1993–1994 about 1–1.500 Polish citizens left South Africa)²¹. Re-emigration from South Africa became often a subject of talks and concrete actions.²² The potential threat of civil war caused that the Polish Association in Johannesburg asked the Polish Embassy in Pretoria for organising plan of evacuation of members of the Diaspora as the governments of the UK, Israel and Portugal done.²³

¹⁷ E.g. „We Will Kill You All for Our Leader”; E. Dąbek, *Emigracja polskich lekarzy do Płd. Afryki*, „Orzeł Biały” marzec 1995, No. 1509, p. 24.

¹⁸ Interview with Waldemar Wójtowicz, chairman of the Polish Association in Johannesburg, Roodepoort 25.06.1994.

¹⁹ “The Star” 15.04.1993; *Poolse gesant wil met Nelson praat*, „Beeld” 16.04.1993.

²⁰ J. van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek. The Story of South Africa’s White Exodus*, Pretoria 2000, passim.

²¹ Interview with Andrzej Opaliński, counselor in the Polish Embassy in Pretoria, Pretoria 24.08.1994.

²² A. Galewski, *op.cit.*, p. 226. The change of attitude of African population towards the Polish Diaspora after assassination of Ch. Hani and reasons of re-emigration from South Africa precisely described in own recollection Polish doctor from Natal who re-emigrated to the United States in mid of the 1990’s. See: M. Nowakowski, *Baie Dankie, Afryko*, Nowa Ruda 2003, passim.

²³ Letter of W. Wójtowicz, chairman of the Polish Association in Johannesburg, to the Polish Embassy in Pretoria, Parklands 4.06.1993 (author’s collection).

Paradoxically, J. Waluś after assassination of Ch. Hani became the most popular Pole in South Africa. He was associated with most famous political murder in South African contemporary history.²⁴ In autobiography of N. Mandela and in many biographies about him words “Poland” or “Poles” did not appear but appeared phrase “Polish immigrant” to describe J. Waluś as a defendant of murder of Ch. Hani²⁵. In turn, in Poland J. Waluś became “hero” and “idol” for Neo-nazis and extremely right-wing nationalists,²⁶ and even in city Radom (more than 220.000 inhabitants) the proposal to name of one of streets was put forward.²⁷

The case of J. Waluś can be treated as an isolated one. The members of the Polish Diaspora did not engage in activity of right wing groups in South Africa. The membership in such organisations as *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging*, *World Apartheid Movement*, *Wit Wolfe*, and *Anti-Communist Catholic Defence League and Traditions, Family and Property* belonged to rarity and was limited to the mining and rural areas where dominated right wing Afrikaners. Minimal influence to the Polish Diaspora had Stallard Foundation which united the English-speaking Right and Anti-communist emigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. There were no answer for calls to establish Polish branches of *World Apartheid Movement* in South Africa.²⁸

Not numerous Polish emigrants were members of ruling National Party (among others Jerzy Wallas long-standing chairman of the Polish Association in Johannesburg) but they played secondary functions. Only a few of members of the Polish Diaspora fulfilled the high posts in South African public administration.²⁹ There were some or more Polish emigrants

²⁴ W. Jagielski, *RPA: Zabójca z Polski chce wyjść z za krat*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 27.07.2007.

²⁵ E.g. see: N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom. The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, Boston–New York 1994.

²⁶ E.g. http://bialeorly.silesiapride.info/janusz_walup.php.

²⁷ A. Arczewski, *Patron z dożywociem*, „Przegląd” 2007, No. 11.

²⁸ Such appeal appeared in leaflet entitled „Światowy Ruch Ochrony Rasy i Kultury – do Polaków w Kraju i na Świecie”, (author’s collection).

²⁹ The most outstanding example is South African senior diplomat Victor Zazeraj (Zażeraj), son of Polish emigrant from eastern borderland (among others South African Ambassador to Poland).

who were engaged in anti-apartheid activity concerning mainly education and social aid for Africans in townships.³⁰

The Polish Diaspora did not directly support the former political system. With the exception of few cases Poles stood apart from internal politics.

Despite not direct engagement in South African political life the political preferences of the Polish Diaspora were rather specified. They overwhelmingly supported National Party but in the end of 1980's certain popularity gained Conservative Party which was opposed to dismantle apartheid system.

The great impact on attitude of the Polish Diaspora towards political reality during apartheid period had South African official propaganda which quite convincingly explained racial stratification with white supremacy, using slogan "Communism" as a bugbear, and interchangeably describing ANC as a agenda of the Soviet Union.³¹ The Polish Diaspora treated the ANC as a communist organization and its activity as a terrorist one.³² The Polish associations were indignant for the fact that Poland finance the ANC and they did not want to have nothing in common with the ANC and its participation in government.³³ The Association of Poles in Southern Africa protested against awarded bishop Desmond Tutu of Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.

Until the end of 1980's the Polish Diaspora was negatively prepared for the participation of non-white population in exercising power in South Africa and they thought that every race should live separately.³⁴

³⁰ E.g. Wywiad z Włodzimierzem Ledóchowskim (rozmawiała W. Laskowska), „Za i przeciw” (photocopy of article in author's collection); USWE Annual Report 1986/7, passim; <http://www.saupj.org.za/whowe/mcweilerschool.html>.

³¹ See: K. Campbell, *ANC. A Soviet Task Force*, London 1986; *The Young Revolutionaries*, Bureau for Information, Pretoria 1988.

³² *Czarne na białym. Rozmowa z Aleksandrą Wnorowską, mikrobiologiem, od 5 lat zamieszkałym w RPA*, „Tygodnik Gdański” 20.10.1991, No. 42.

³³ „Komunikat Stowarzyszenia Polskiego w Cape Province”, czerwiec – lipiec 1991, No. 5; *Republika Południowej Afryki. Jesteśmy bardzo daleko. Rozmowa z p. Edwardem de Virion, prezesem Rady Polonii Afryki Południowej*, „Kurier Wileński” 12.01.1993, p. 5.

³⁴ A. Rapacki, *Polacy i RPA*, „Prawo i Życie” 16.03.1991, No. 11, p. 1, 13.

In early 1990's, the majority of the Polish Diaspora became increasingly convinced of the inevitability of dismantling apartheid and reforms initiated by President Frederick Willem de Klerk.³⁵ Many of Poles regarded the reforms as a necessary evil. According to the activists of the Polish Diaspora majority of this Diaspora supported political reform (unfortunately, there are no its voting results in referendum in 1992).³⁶ But opposite opinions were also formulated.³⁷ The only one member of the Polish Diaspora – Jan Kiepiela – was directly engaged in talks between ruling National Party and still delegalized the ANC.³⁸ The round table in KwaZulu Natal was the effect of the talks.³⁹

The Polish Diaspora had fears concerning for the creation of New South Africa. These fears were connected with possibility of substitution of white's domination for black's one. There were many opinions that the ANC and the SACP wanted to use democratic election to introduce totalitarian state after winning election; that new political system would not prevent bloody conflicts.

At the beginning of 1990's associations of the Polish Diaspora made certain contacts with white government and NP. However the associations did not cooperate with political opposition representing Africans. They possessed only weak links with Inkatha Freedom Party grouping mainly Zulus. The associations had only incidental contacts with Democratic Party representing white liberals.⁴⁰ The members of the Polish Diaspora

³⁵ Wywiad z prezesem Rady Polonii Afryka Południe E. de Virionem (rozmawiał A. Studziński)...

³⁶ A. Żukowski, *Współczesna problematyka zbiorowości polonijnej w Republice Południowej Afryki z uwzględnieniem elementów prognostycznych* (Opracowanie przygotowane na zlecenie Departamentu Konsularnego i Wychodźstwa Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych), Warszawa 1992, p. 93; I. Wójcik, *Czarny koniec wakacji*, „Polityka” 1.05.1993, No. 18.

³⁷ P. Snarski, *Afrykaner w Warszawie*, „Prawo i Życie” 15.02.1992, No. 7.

³⁸ At that time Andrzej Kiepiela was marketing director of the Durban Publicity Association, now he is a Consul Honorary of Poland in Durban, see: W. Henning, *Andrzej Kiepiela. Pole Star*, „Cosmopolitan” June 1988, p. 94–97.

³⁹ *Podróżnik Kiepiela książę Durbanu*, TVP 1 Programme, 28.06.2007, 10:35 p.m., <http://tvp.pl/7212,20070612510831>.

⁴⁰ „Komunikat. Zjednoczenie Polskie w Johannesburgu” czerwiec 1994, No. 410, p. 1.

underlined that among African political movements only IFP saw problems of small emigrant communities.

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The distance of the Polish Diaspora to the South African political life deepened during and after transition. The thesis could be formulated that the Polish Diaspora tries to live in seclusion of that life. There are no members of the Polish Diaspora in South African political establishment.⁴¹ Despite of such passive stand, the Polish Diaspora votes in South African elections. The Polish Diaspora took part massively in the first general parliamentary election for all races in April 1994.

Relying on the opinion of the Polish activists and staff of the Polish diplomatic posts, it can be mention that during the election the majority of Poles voted for the National Party. Far fewer of them opted for the Afrikaner's Freedom Front of General Constand Viljoen and only individuals supported the African National Congress. In Natal, some votes were cast for the Inkatha Freedom Party to avoid "waste of votes."⁴² According to the other sources political preferences of the Polish Diaspora in Johannesburg and Pretoria divided equally for National Party and Freedom Front.⁴³

The Polish Diaspora received the results of the election absolutely did not satisfy the Polish Diaspora and ANC victory as a own defeat. However some associations congratulated winners of the election and sent congratulations for new president of the RSA Nelson Mandela what was criticized by the part of the Polish activists. The Polish Diaspora demon-

⁴¹ See: *A-Z of South African Politics. The Essential Handbook 1995*, A. Harber, B. Ludman (eds.), Cape Town 1995; *A-Z of South African Politics. The Essential Handbook 1999*, P. van Niekerk, B. Ludman (eds.), London–New York 1999; *A-Z of South African Politics. The Essential Handbook 2004*, P. Slober, B. Ludman (ed.), Johannesburg 2004; *The Political Directory of South Africa*, Cape Town 1996; *Who's Who in South African Politics*. No. 5, P. Gastrow (ed.), Johannesburg 1995.

⁴² The interviews with staff of the Polish Embassy in Pretoria and the Polish activists from Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Vanderbijlpark, July–October 1994.

⁴³ W. Jagielski, *Wybory czarnych wybory białych*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 28.04.1994, No. 99.

strated big sobriety in relation to the new South African authorities, especially originated from the ANC.⁴⁴

The participation (a turnout) of the Polish Diaspora in the next parliamentary election in 1999 was much lower. The undisputed hegemony of the ANC became a fact and political parties represented white population were in crisis. Many members of the Polish Diaspora were aware of situation that participation in election would change nothing and therefore it prevented them from voting. Such trend was noticeable during election in 2004 as well as in 2009.

The Polish Diaspora negatively judged affirmative action policy of new government. The policy was aimed to compensate injustices of apartheid but for many whites, also members of the Polish Diaspora employed in public sector and state companies it meant earlier dismissal from the work.

After gaining power by black majority the Polish Diaspora did not maintain close contacts with the ruling ANC. The Polish associations underline own political indifference. Some of them even in own statute underlined that they do not engage in activity of none political party.

Despite high professional and social status the Polish Diaspora did not create pro-Polish lobby in South Africa. Influence of the Diaspora for South African decision-making centres, especially in New South Africa is none.

From the perspective of last a dozen so years the Polish Diaspora, like majority of whites in South Africa, recollected former political system on the basis of apartheid with nostalgia but was aware of apartheid injustice and its inevitability.

The Polish Diaspora representing high level of education and high-qualified skills looks ahead in nascent democracy in South Africa but sees also many threats.

It should be added that the Polish Diaspora was and is more interested in political life of mother-country (Poland). Since 1990, like other Polish

⁴⁴ The extreme opinions stated that after ending apartheid pro-racist attitudes increased significantly among the Polish Diaspora, see: *Życie i praca w RPA*, <http://www.afryka.diplomacy.pl/forum/viewtopic.php?t=112>.

Diasporas in the world, possess right to take part in the Polish presidential, and parliamentary elections, as well as (since 2004) in election to the European Parliament.⁴⁵

ABSTRACT

The article focuses, first and foremost, on attitude of the Polish Diaspora in the RSA towards socio-political situation in country of settlement. In solving problem particular attention is drawn to the attitude of the Polish Diaspora to political transition in South Africa. Relation to this process is portrayed by engagement of the Polish Diaspora in building new political order after apartheid – multiethnic democracy called New South Africa, among others through its participation in parliamentary elections, referendums and membership in political parties. Conclusions concentrate on conditions and effects of the Polish Diaspora participation in political life in country of settlement.

⁴⁵ The Polish citizens have right to vote abroad if they possess valid Polish passport and they stay in countries where are Polish diplomatic or consular posts.